

No. 31

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY



JACK LIGHTFOOT'S LUCKY FIND

OR THE NEW MAN WHO COVERED "SHORT"



by MAURICE STEVENS

With the smash of the bat, Gridley seemed to bound into the air like a rubber man and snatched down the swift liner.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 31.

NEW YORK, September 9, 1905.

Price Five Cents.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S LUCKY FIND;

OR,

The New Man Who Covered Short.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, one of those who followed the newcomer, Birkett, being dazzled by the dash of his manner, and the free way in which he flung money around.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Phil Kirtland, Jack's former rival, but who just at present was working on the ball team with Lightfoot.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *jiu-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Brodie Strawn and **Wilson Crane**, members of the Cranford baseball team.

Chick Gridley, the fellow who covered "short," and also covered himself with glory both as a ball player and as an amateur detective.

Mack Remington, who was in training for the active life of a reporter.

Neil Burdock, **Sandy**, **Chalkeye**, a trio of desperadoes, bent upon making money easily.

Susie Powers, a golden haired fairy residing in Cardiff, with whom Ned Skeen, the "girl hater," fell in love.

Mamie, a little sister of Susie.

CHAPTER I.

NED SKEEN AS A HERO.

Ned Skeen was in Cardiff, and he was having what he would have called "the time of his life." His radiant face showed that he was sublimely happy.

The reason is not far to seek. He was making a call on Susie Powers—Susie of the Golden Hair. Ned "hated" all other girls, or said he did—but Susie!—he did not see how anyone could dislike Susie.

As Ned sat with Susie, in the parlor of her home, he had but one wish, and that was that he might be as tall as some other of the Cranford fellows, as tall as Jack Lightfoot, or Phil Kirtland, for instance. He almost felt that he would be willing to be as much of a long-shanks as Wilson Crane, if he could be as tall as Wilson.

It is really dreadful to be short, Ned thought, and have your "best girl" nearly three inches taller than you are.

But Ned almost forgot that, in talking of things at Cranford.

When Ned talked of things at Cranford he necessarily said a good deal about the baseball nine of which he was a member. He was generally thinking of baseball, when he was not considering Susie Powers, and here he had the joy of thinking of them both at the same time.

Ned was talking of baseball, and was instructing Susie in some of the finer points of the game; so that she might be the better able to enjoy the big game to be played in Cardiff the next day. Some of the members of the Cranford nine were already in Cardiff, among them Jack Lightfoot. Ned had come over with Jack.

"But do you really think," said Susie, looking at Ned with her glorious eyes—Ned thought they were glorious—"that what you fellows call a mascot really does any good? Why can't you play just as well without a mascot? What good does it do to have a parrot, or a dog, or a monkey, or even a person, strung round with ribbons for a mascot?"

Ned laughed.

"Oh, well, that's just fun, you know! None of the fellows really think that helps them to win the games. But it's fun. Yale college, you know, has a bulldog wearing the Yale colors, which runs out and barks at the opposing team. And Harvard College has an old fruit dealer they call John the Orangeman, who drives out on the field in his cart behind his little donkey; and generally he leads the procession round the field before the game begins. Sometimes I think it helps; I know it makes me feel like yelling, just to see that dog, Rex, flirting round with ribbons on him, simply because he's *called* our mascot. I guess it must be something the same as when soldiers see the flag of their country. There's really nothing in a flag, you know, outside of the sentiment—it's just some cloth in red and white stripes with a field of stars in one corner; but soldiers would die for that flag, and what it stands for. It's something like that with a mascot, and with the colors. Our colors are white and blue, you know."

He looked with admiration at the blue and white ribbons with which Susie Powers had decked her hair. Ned felt that he had made a beautiful speech, and he was rather proud of it.

Susie laughed, and Ned wondered if he had said anything he should not have said.

He was reassured by her words:

"I was just thinking of the monkey you had for a mascot over at Tidewater, and how it got down under the grand stand with some matches and set the grand stand on fire!"

"Oh, well, it hadn't been trained, you know! If we'd had it a while it would have been different. Jube and Wilson only got hold of it that morning."*

"Yes, that's so," she admitted.

"But see how we had the parrot trained," said Ned, "and how we've got that dog trained. Oh, I tell you training will do almost anything for an animal!"

"Yes, I have heard some remarkable things about that."

"Remarkable!" cried Ned. "Simply wonderful, some of them are; almost too much to believe. But the strangest was one I read about the other day."

"Oh, is that so? Tell me about it. I do love strange stories!"

She clasped her hands in her lap and looked at him so eagerly that it quite put Ned's heart into a flutter.

"Well, this was a story of a snake."

She wrinkled her forehead and shrugged her shoulders, for girls do not fancy snakes and seldom like to think of them even.

"This one was so tame that it fed out of its owner's hand, and slept on the floor of his room every night. It was a whaling big rattlesnake, and the man kept it in his room as a sort of watchdog; for, of course, no one would want to go in there where it was, if he knew about it. But one night a burglar got into the room, while the man was out. The man happened to be out in the yard; and the first thing he knew the snake had that burglar by the throat *and was rattling its tail out of the window to call its owner.*"

Susie did not know whether Ned believed this or was just trying to be humorous; so she flushed, declaring that the story was bigger than the rattlesnake, and altogether too big to believe.

"I read it in a newspaper," said Ned, laughing.

"Oh, you can read anything in newspapers!"

Somewhat afraid that he had offended, Ned dropped the subject as if it were a hot potato, and suggested that they should go out somewhere and get some ice cream, as the hour was yet early.

There are not many girls of Susie's age who can resist such an invitation.

At any rate, Susie did not resist it, nor try to; she told Ned, with one of her sweetest smiles, that she would be delighted to go.

And then she quitted the room, to get her hat, and disappeared up the stairway.

In another minute she came flying back down the

*See last week's issue, No. 30, "Jack Lightfoot in the Box; or, The Mascot that Hoodooed the Nine."

stairs, screaming at the top of her lungs, and flung herself into the parlor in a very panic of terror.

"What is it—what is it?" Ned queried, jumping up.

He put his arm about her for comfort and protection, and faced toward the door, toward which she was looking.

"What is it?"

"Oh—oh! it's a b-burglar; he was in my room upstairs, and—and——"

Ned heard a noise at the top of the stairs, as if a window was being hoisted; and then heard a heavy thud of feet in the yard outside, telling him that the burglar, frightened by Susie's outcry, had jumped from the window.

Ned left the side of Susie Powers when he heard that, and dashed boldly out into the yard, for Ned was not a coward.

He was just in time to see the sneak thief leap through the gate, and he saw him run along the street.

"Stop thief!" Ned yelled, and ran in pursuit.

Ned was a pretty good runner, and he began to push the rascal hard; but just when he seemed to be attracting some attention to the man, and it began to look as if he would be able to drive him into a corner, Ned ran plump into such a torrent of water that he stopped and fell back gasping.

The fire company of Cardiff was out on the street there testing a new hose.

The hose was all right, to judge by the force of the water that came from it. Ned was willing to declare that the stream was as big as a man's body and coming from the nozzle of the hose at a mile a minute, when it struck him the second time, hitting him fair and lifting him bodily from his feet and throwing him down on his back.

The hose was switched into another direction, for the men had luckily seen Ned; and Ned lay on his back, gasping in a pool of water, like a big fish that has run into shallows.

Ned climbed ruefully to his feet. His starched shirt front had all the starch soaked out of it, his other clothing was wet, and his cap lay in the muddy water. Altogether Ned was in such a state that he grew fiery with indignation.

"Why in time didn't you look what you were doing?" he howled at the leader of the hose company.

"Why in time didn't you look where you were going?" was howled back at him. "Didn't you see us here?"

Then Ned recalled the burglar—all thought of the sneak thief had been knocked out of him for a min-

ute or more. And he told the hosemen that he had been chasing a burglar and had been too much excited to see anything but the man he was following.

"You was following that feller?" was the query. "Well, he went that way!"

The man pointed.

"I'm too late to catch him now!"

The man laughed sarcastically as he observed Ned's rather diminutive size. Ned looked smaller than usual in his soaked condition.

"Well, I wish I could have seen you capture him right here! Was he a burglar?"

"Sure!" Ned snapped. "And you let him get away from me!"

There was no use following the man now. Ned wanted to return to the Powers home to report; but when he regarded his soaked condition, he was constrained first to seek a gentlemen's furnishing store and get a new shirt and collar and necktie.

There he also removed some of the mud in which he had wallowed, and relieved his mind somewhat by fuming at the hose company.

Though he did not feel that he was even yet entirely presentable, he returned to the house; and there found that, owing to statements made by Susie, he had been elevated to the position of a hero in the eyes of the whole family.

Susie's father and mother had been in a distant part of the house at the time of the supposed burglary, but Susie's cries had drawn them, and had also drawn the servants. Then she had told them of the burglar, and of how Ned was chasing him.

Though Mr. Powers smiled slightly at Ned's crumpled condition, Susie did not think there was anything to laugh about, when Ned explained how he had run into that stream of water from the hose.

Mr. Powers had telephoned to the police station, and soon a policeman came and examined the place where the porch thief had entered, and questioned everyone.

"I don't know how he looked," Susie acknowledged; "I was too frightened."

"And I don't know how he looked," said Ned; "for I had only a back view of him."

"We'll try to round him up," said the policeman; in a tone which showed he did not think they could do it.

And then he went away.

Susie and Ned had now something really exciting to talk about, and they were on the point of working their tongues overtime, when Ned remembered that

Susie had accepted his invitation to go out and have some ice cream.

Before reminding her of it he looked himself over, and concluded that he was still more than half presentable, and his clothing was drying fast.

"I don't know whether you'll want to go out with me now, and I know I shan't feel just right myself," he said, brushing again at his clothing; "but that ice cream, you know!"

Then Susie got a brush and helped to put Ned in proper condition to appear on the street.

"I'm still awfully nervous," she declared.

"Ice cream is good for the nerves," said Ned. "Lafe Lampton says it is, anyway."

Then, in spite of some slight objection on the part of her mother, who seemed to fear that the burglar would be in hiding and ready to pounce upon them at the first corner, they went out upon the street together, and took their way to an ice cream parlor which Susie recommended.

CHAPTER II.

NEIL BURDOCK.

Ned Skeen could hardly repress a cry of surprise and delight, when, on entering the ice cream parlor, he beheld at one of the tables Macklin Remington and a sandy-complexioned young fellow known as Chick Gridley.

Mack was a member of the Cranford baseball nine, and Chick Gridley had lived in Cranford a good deal, though just now he was traveling for a clothing house and was in Cranford very little. In the old days—which were not so very far away after all—Chick had been one of Ned's warmest friends.

As a consequence, and because Chick rose from the table and rushed at him, Ned had the supreme satisfaction of introducing to both Mack and Chick the "best little girl in the world," Miss Susie Powers; and Susie blushed very becomingly and admitted that she was "pleased to make their acquaintance."

Then, of course, Ned had to tell about the burglar; and it was some time before he and Susie were at a table by themselves, with the heaping plates of ice cream before them, Susie having chosen chocolate and Ned vanilla.

"Fine-looking girl," said Gridley, speaking to Mack as he spooned ice cream into his mouth. "Does she live here? I thought Ned didn't like girls!"

While Mack Remington was explaining the sudden change in Ned, brought about by his acquaintance

with the charming Miss Powers, of Cardiff, a man came into the room and took a seat at a table not far away.

When Mack saw him his apple-red cheeks grew redder than usual, for this man was Neil Burdock, the city tough who had jumped on Phil Kirtland at Highland some time before.

Neil Burdock and the toughs with him at that time had tried to knock out some of the Cranford boys, and had been badly whipped and then dragged to the Highland jail and fined roundly for their "fun."*

Neil Burdock looked to be a sporting pugilist, or a gentlemanly burglar. His neck was thick, his head round, his mustache black, as if it had been dyed, and his jaw was heavy. He was clothed in a flashy plaid suit, and across his big stomach was strung a watch chain of immense size. On the finger of one hand a big ring, that was probably an imitation diamond, flashed when the electric light struck it.

Neil Burdock gave an order to a waiter.

Then Mack received a nervous start, which he managed to conceal, though his apple-red cheeks took on an extremely rosy hue.

"Geel!" he gurgled to himself. "That's telegraphy!"

A second man had appeared, at a window outside, and then with his back to the window he had begun to drum on the pane with the fingers of one hand held behind him and pressed against the pane.

It seemed a natural attitude and a not unnatural thing to do; but Mack, who understood telegraphy, recognized it as a message, and was able to read the words thus spelled out.

Mack touched Gridley's foot under the table and whispered:

"Hear that?"

Chick had observed nothing; but Mack was reading the message, and this is what he made of it:

"That's—the—young—fellow—and—girl. Guess—better—slide. Can—do—job—yet—to-night."

That Burdock read this, also, was plain, for he had glanced quickly at Ned and Susie.

Mack Remington had a keen, quick brain.

He could put two and two together and make four out of them as rapidly as the next one.

What he made out of this was, that one of these men was the "burglar" whom Ned Skeen had chased; and,

*See No. 22, "Jack Lightfoot's 'Stone-Wall' Infield," for the story of how Neil Burdock, hired by Reel Snodgrass and Delancy Shelton, tried to knock out certain players of the Cranford nine, and was himself knocked out in the attempt.

further, that some other "job," or the one left unfinished, was to be done that night.

At the same time Mack, who had the reporter's instinct and constantly thought of news, smelt a sensation here by which he might be able to get a column or two in the Cardiff paper.

Burdock now countermanded the order which he had given to the waiter; and, rising from the table, went out of the room, and the two men walked up the street together.

Burdock was hardly through the door before Mack Remington was at Ned Skeen's side, telling him what he had heard the man tap out with his fingers on the window.

When he heard that, Ned Skeen popped to his feet like a jack-in-the-box.

"Howling mackerels, we've got to follow 'em!"

Then he remembered Susie; he could not leave her there and force her to take her way home alone.

So he said, hurriedly:

"Mack, you and Chick keep those fellows in sight, and telephone to the police the first chance you get; and telephone to Mr. Powers. You'll find his telephone number in the directory. I'm going home with Miss Powers; and then I'll come right back here. Maybe one of you can come back here and meet me, or report to me here in some way—perhaps by telephone."

Mack Remington, scenting a news sensation, hardly heard all of this. He had caught Chick Gridley by the arm and was hurrying with him toward the door.

On the threshold he met Jack and Tom Lightfoot, Brodie Strawn, Phil Kirtland and some others.

"Here," he said; "you're just the fellows I wanted to meet! Come along! It's a burglar chase, and a sensation for the paper. I'll tell you about it."

He almost dragged Jack off the steps in his eagerness.

"There they go," he whispered, pointing; "and now we want to keep them in sight. One of them, as you can see, is that tough, Neil Burdock."

They had not gone a block, and Mack was not through with his explanations, before Ned Skeen came running to join them.

"She's gone home with a girl friend she met, and I'm going with you fellows! Where is he?"

"Keep still!" Jack warned. "They're right there ahead of us in that crowd. They haven't spotted us yet."

"But hadn't we better, one of us, jump to a telephone somewhere and ring up the police?"

"I don't suppose you can be mistaken about this, Mack?" Jack asked.

"Not on your life; I'm sure of it! And pap says that when a fellow is sure of a thing he knows it. A fellow wouldn't spell words out that way by mere accident. One of those chaps is Ned's burglar."

"But would that be considered proof, do you think—what you heard?"

"Hardly proof," said Tom Lightfoot, "but if we have him pulled something may be found on him that will give him away, or he might be scared into a confession. That fellow with him is Burdock, sure. I could never forget that black mustache and that bulldog mug."

"I owe Burdock something for the way he knocked me down at Highland!" said Phil Kirtland, angrily. "I'm willing to stick to his trail until we find out just what he's up to in this town."

"He may have some scheme against the nine," was Jack's suggestion; and it was the thought also of Brodie Strawn.

The boys continued to gain on Burdock and his companion, who still seemed not to be aware that they were being followed.

Suddenly the two men vanished.

They turned a corner quickly, not twenty feet ahead of the boys; but when the boys reached that corner both Burdock and his companion were gone.

"They went in here," said Jack.

He pointed to the open door of a saloon, which was at that corner.

It seemed so clear that the men could have gone nowhere else that Jack led the way into the saloon, expecting to see the men at the bar; but they were not there.

The barkeeper came toward the group of young fellows, as if scenting customers.

Jack looked at him carefully before speaking.

"Two men came in here just now!"

"How long ago?"

"Just now!"

The barkeeper showed the faintest trace of a smile on his round, puffy face.

"Nit!" he said. "No one come in here just now."

"You're sure of that?"

"Sure? Course I'm sure! Was you lookin' fer some one?"

There were some back rooms, as Jack could see; but he saw, also, that the barkeeper did not intend to divulge anything.

Tom and Phil pushed on into these rooms without

questioning, while Jack stood parleying with the barkeeper; and, returning, they reported that no one was back there.

That faint smile played again across the barkeeper's face.

"Have something to drink?" he invited. "It will help to keep you from seeing things!"

Jack felt a flush of anger; he was sure that the man was laughing at him, and that the pursued men had entered the saloon and gone on through it.

To stay there, however, was to waste time.

He went out into the street, and was followed by his companions. Some of them, including Ned Skeen and Phil Kirtland, hurried on; while the others gathered round Jack.

"They're in that saloon, or were," said Jack, positively. "There's no good in chasing further. Over there is a telephone station."

Mack started across the street at a run.

"I'll call up the police," he said.

Ned Skeen and Phil Kirtland came back without having discovered anything, and the boys waited on the corner until a policeman appeared.

But no one was found in the saloon.

"I hardly thought there would be," Jack acknowledged. "Those fellows were too much for us. This barkeeper knew them, and let them pass through his place, and then lied about it. Of course they got into some other building, or out on the street again. All the time, while we were following them and were sure they hadn't spotted us, they knew they were being pursued."

Ned was still much excited.

"And now what?" he asked.

"Well," said Mack, slowly, giving one of his sage maxims, "pap says that when a rabbit has got out of a trap he's out, and there isn't any use running after him."

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED TO NED.

A desire to tell Susie Powers what the boys had discovered—or shall we say had not discovered?—led Ned Skeen again toward the Powers home.

He hurried rapidly, and did not know that the time was so late until he reached the house and saw that it was dark.

"Howling mackerels," he gasped, "we must have talked on the street there a thundering long time!"

He looked at his watch by the nearest street lamp and was astonished to see how late it was.

Ned and the other young fellows from Cranford had talked on the street a long time—too long a time, Jack afterward thought, remembering that they were to meet the Cardiff nine the next afternoon. There was a good deal to talk about—the discovery of the "burglar" by Susie Powers, the queer telegraphy heard by Mack Remington, the pursuit of the two men, the actions and words of the barkeeper, the search by the policeman of the saloon, not to speak of what Mack considered a threat of another "job" to be done that night, or a "job" to be finished that night.

"It's too bad that I didn't get here earlier," thought Ned, regretfully, as he looked at the house. "They're all in bed, I suppose, and it would hardly be the proper thing to ring them up now. I ought to have come sooner."

Ned walked on down the street, thinking over the matter. At one moment he was half resolved to return to the house and acquaint Mr. Powers with the result of the chase after the "burglar"; and the next moment he was assuring himself that it would not be the proper thing, or was wondering if he ought not to go personally to the police station for an interview with the men at headquarters.

"But those police are no good!"

Ned had not liked the rather skeptical manner of the policeman who had come to look through the saloon when Mack rang up the station; the cop, in his wisdom, had seemed to think the boys were sensationalists, or fools.

Ned spent a good deal of time in trying to determine what he ought to do, and then returned along the street without reaching a conclusion.

The time was now far past midnight.

As Ned came up to the familiar yard, with its shrubbery and neatly mown grass—it was a large house, set back in handsome grounds—he fancied he saw the shadow of a man among the low trees.

Ned stiffened like a pointer dog scenting game birds.

"Gee!" he gurgled. "Did I see something, or just fancy it? Howling mackerels! I wonder if that burglar has come back again?"

Ned stood silently on the street, listening, but heard nothing.

After standing there a while, and seeing and hearing not a thing, he walked on; but stopped on the corner above, where a shade tree offered the concealment of its heavy shadows.

Here Ned squatted down, with his eyes glued on the house. He found that he was trembling with excitement and nervousness.

"This makes me feel like a burglar myself," was his thought, "to be sitting here watching the house; and I don't know what the folks would say about it if they knew it, or should happen to see me. Maybe I'd better move on."

But he did not.

The conviction that he had seen the shadow of a man in the midst of the shrubbery was still strong on him, and it held him there.

The time now passed slowly enough. Almost every minute Ned strained his eyes to look at his watch, and was surprised to discover that the time had passed so slowly.

As he sat there, watching and listening, he fancied he heard the creak of a shutter at the back of the house.

But his excitable nerves were so wrought up now that he could not be sure he had heard anything.

Nevertheless, he rose from his tiresome position under the tree, and, crossing the street, walked back in the direction of the house.

Then again he thought he saw the shadow of a man in the shrubbery; and the next instant his heart jumped into his throat and threatened to stop there and cease beating, when a man darted out across the grass toward a side fence, and a scream rose from some one.

It seemed the scream of a child, and it sounded very loud, in the silence of the night.

Ned now forgot what the Powers family might say or think, and ran into the yard, and at a rapid pace toward the fence which the man was trying to cross.

Again that scream—the scream of a child—came; and Ned saw the man strike at something. He believed the man held the child in his arms, and had struck it into unconsciousness, for the scream did not rise again.

As Ned ran thus across the yard and the second scream throbbed on the night air, a window was shoved up in the second story of the house and a voice cried out something.

Then a second man came bounding from behind the house, making for that fence. He was a big fellow, and, though the light was poor there under the trees, Ned knew that this man was Neil Burdock.

Ned was so much excited now that he forgot fear and caution, and rushed at the big fellow, as a little dog is seen sometimes to rush at a big one.

"Stop!" he yelled. "Stop!"

The man stopped, long enough for Ned to come near him; then with a forward jump and a swing of a ponderous fist he stretched Ned senseless on the grass.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF THE ABDUCTION.

When Ned Skeen came back to himself, with his head whirling round so that all the trees and everything seemed to be racing in a circle like the wooden horses of a merry-go-round, he found Susie Powers bending over him, and Susie's father and mother and some servants dashing frantically about the grounds as if they were searching for something, or didn't know what they were doing.

Susie had thrown an old wrapper round her and her golden hair hung in a straight, stiff braid down her back; but Ned did not observe that. In fact, for a little while Ned hardly knew where he was or what had happened.

Mrs. Powers was screaming like a maniac; and, hearing her, some men came running in from the street.

"Mamie!" she screamed. "Mamie—Mamie!"

"What is it, ma'am?" one of the men asked. "Anything we can do?"

"Mamie!" she screeched again.

Ned tried to sit up straight; then the world seemed to give a flop and turn a somersault, and he tumbled backward into the arms of Susie Powers.

The next thing that Ned knew he was in the house, on a lounge, and a doctor, who had been hastily summoned, was bending over him.

Ned was rather dazed, as he opened his eyes and stared about. Two servants were in the room, in addition to the doctor, and for a moment or so Ned hardly knew where he was.

"He'll be all right after a while," he heard the doctor say to the servants. "He was struck a heavy blow on the head."

And that brought it all back to Ned.

"Say!" he cried, starting up in excitement.

"Better lie down!" urged the doctor.

"But I want to know about that!"

Ned waved his hands and seemed to be in a raving mood.

"Hadn't I better call some one?" asked one of the servants.

She turned to the other servant.

"Has Mr. Powers got back yet?"

"There's no need," said the doctor. "Here"—he was speaking to Ned—"you must lie back there and try to keep quiet!"

"But I—I want to know—to know about that!" said Ned.

"About the abduction, you mean?"

"About the screams, and the man who knocked me down. I know who that was."

"Well, young man, if you do, you know more than the police do!"

"It was Neil Burdock."

This seemed not to make much impression on the doctor, who again urged him to lie down.

"But I've got to know about that," said Ned, struggling to get off the lounge. "Where's Susie—I mean Miss Powers?"

One of the servants answered.

"She may be in her room, but I don't know. We've all been so upset that I don't know anything."

The doctor spoke again, when he saw that Ned would not be quieted, and when Ned asked him what he meant by the "abduction."

"Some men got into the house and carried off the little girl, Mamie—abducted her, you know, for a reward. Mr. Powers is out in town; a doctor is upstairs with Mrs. Powers, who is in hysteria; and I was called to attend to you, for it seems that you were knocked down by one of the men. That's the supposition, anyway; but I've been wondering, and so have others, as to how you happened to be there in the yard, even if you are a friend of the family?"

"Say, I've got to tell about that," said Ned, in much excitement. "No, I won't lie back there any longer! I—I'm all right, I tell you, and I won't lie back there."

He threw off the doctor and struggled to a sitting position; but again the world took a flop and a jump, and Ned grew so blind and dizzy that he was glad to lie back on the lounge.

"Young man," said the doctor, when Ned was again in a talking mood, "you'll get along faster if you'll keep quiet. And you'll get out of this sooner."

"But—but I want to know all about that!" Ned began to fume again.

"I've told you already. It seems that some one—a burglar—broke into the house earlier in the evening. Some think he was one of the same men who came later and carried off the little girl. They left a piece of writing on the floor, telling Mr. Powers that they had taken the child, and that if he would leave ten thousand dollars in a certain place at a certain time she would be restored to him unharmed; otherwise that he would never see her again. The child's mother is almost insane, and the whole family are in not much better condition. You were found, senseless, in the yard. Some one saw you, from a window, chasing a man; and it was thought he knocked you down there in the yard; you were running after him in the yard.

Now, that's absolutely all that is known by anyone, and if you'll be satisfied with that, and lie here quietly until morning, and take the medicine I've prescribed for you, you'll probably be able to leave the house to-morrow. But you can't go out, nor can you try to go out, to-night; and, perhaps, you'll not be able to do much walking, even to-morrow."

"But——" Ned began to rave again.

"You must keep quiet, I tell you!"

"But, howling mackerels! I've got to help find those fellows, haven't I? And to-morrow I've got to play in the ball game! Lie here? Well, I guess nit!"

Just the same, Ned Skeen stayed there; for when he tried to get up the room spun round again, and if he had tried to walk he would have tumbled forward on his face.

CHAPTER V.

CHICK GRIDLEY AS AN AMATEUR DETECTIVE.

It was the ambition of Chick Gridley to become a detective.

He was a drummer for a clothing house, and somewhat proudly spoke of himself as a commercial traveler; yet this was from necessity. He had to do something to make a living. When he dreamed of what he wanted to be, he always saw himself as a Sherlock Holmes craftily trailing criminals to their doom.

Therefore, Chick Gridley had been mightily interested in that story of the burglar, and in the unsuccessful pursuit in which he had taken part.

When Jack Lightfoot went to the Clarendon Hotel, at that late hour, accompanied by some friends, Chick was almost glad to part from them; for that left him free to work on this mystery alone.

He went back to the saloon where the trail had been lost, and, standing outside for some time, watched it, until the hour of midnight arrived, and the shutters were put up for the night.

Among those who came out of the saloon at the closing hour was a slouching fellow, with his hat pulled well down over his eyes.

Chick spotted him at once.

"My man!" he thought, confidently.

To Chick's fancy the slouching gait and shuffling movements, and above all that hat pulled down to half hide the face, were but devices to conceal this individual's identity. Chick believed that this was the smaller of the two men he and the other young fellows had chased.

When the man turned down a side street, Chick was close at his heels.

Remembering that it was not wise to appear to be following the man, Chick crossed the street and strolled along the pavement on the other side.

Not many people were on the street, and the stores were closed; but in the windows of some of the stores lights burned, showing the things displayed for sale; and before these windows, at intervals, Chick stopped, and pretended to look at the articles, but all the while watching the man on the other side of the street, who seemed in no great hurry to get out of the district.

The man walked slowly, and Chick found plenty of time to take in the shop windows as he passed along.

Chick was now thrilling with excitement. He had read detective stories, and this was the way the heroes of those stories always did when shadowing. He began to call himself the "Sly Shadower, or the Sleuth Who Never Gets Left."

Once the man halted in his rather slow walk, and Chick dodged quickly into a doorway to escape observation.

The thing was really becoming more than exciting.

Chick felt his heart jumping, as the man moved on and he took up the pursuit. He was more than ever resolved that he would at an early day become a regular detective. There was no romance in going from store to store and selling clothing; nothing worth while ever really happened in that line of trade; and many a time, after walking for hours and interviewing dozens of men, he had not a single sale to show for it. But detective work—it promised oceans of excitement.

When the man left the street and passed through an alley, Chick's excitement reached a really feverish pitch; and it climbed still higher, when the man left the town and struck out across some open lots.

"Gee!" Chick gasped. "He's going toward the baseball grounds!"

Chick crouched at the end of the street and looked out after the man.

The light out there was poor, compared with that of the streets, and Chick could hardly see him.

Fearing the man would escape him altogether, Chick now set out across the lots, maintaining his dogged pursuit.

"I ought to have brought a revolver with me," was his thought, "or a big knife, or something; I may get into a row with that fellow."

Chick had only a small pocketknife, but this he took from his pocket, and with it in his right hand and the large blade opened, he continued his chase.

The man seemed now to be going toward a rather large building which stood close by the ball grounds;

and Chick began to think that his adventure was going to mix into the game of the next day in some manner, though he could not see just how.

To his ears came a low bellowing, as of cattle.

Chick stopped and listened.

"Cattle over there!" he said.

Then he observed that there were some railway tracks not far away, making the discovery when a train passed along.

"Stockyards there, I guess, and the cattle are in the stockyards!"

The man continued his slouching gait; but once or twice he looked back—a proof to Chick that he half expected to be followed.

When the man thus looked back, Chick "froze" in his place, so that in the darkness he resembled a black stump standing in a field.

When the man reached the building and there vanished, Chick's heart beat a wild tattoo.

He had not been able yet to decide what he would do if he found Neil Burdock and this man together.

It would be proof to his mind of all his suspicions; but he hardly felt able to tackle both of them, when perhaps they were heavily armed; and if he took time to go for the police, the men would probably be gone when he returned. And, besides, he did not relish the thought of summoning the police and having them laugh at him, as he was sure they would do, if nothing came of it.

He was still not able to settle this question of what he should do if he found Neil Burdock and this man together; yet he crept on up to the building, so excited he could hardly breathe.

He saw a door, which he was sure the man had passed through, and made for that.

As he came close up to it the man appeared, stepping out of the door and confronting him.

"Whot you doin' here?"

That was the summons that brought Chick Gridley up standing.

He did not know what to do or say; for now he saw, when the man stood up straight and thus faced him, that this was not the man who had been with Neil Burdock.

"Did—did you go in there j-just now?" he asked.

"Wot if I did? Is it any your biz wot I do, er where I goes?"

"Nun-no!" Chick acknowledged, trembling.

"Wot you doin' here?"

"Well—well that's the ball grounds over there, and

—and—the fellows from Cranford are to play there tut-to-morrow, and I——”

“See ’ere! You been follerin’ me?”

“No.”

“Do you belong in Cranford?”

“Y-yes, my home’s there.”

“Better run along home then; I don’t want you round here, and the ball game ain’t called yit. Did you come up along by the ball-ground fence?”

“Yes.”

“An’ you wasn’t follerin’ me?”

“No.”

“Cut out, then.”

Chick hesitated. He was not sure yet that this was the man he had followed.

“Clear out, before I kick your head off!” the man shouted, moving toward him.

And Chick, his confidence having taken a slump, moved along by the building and disappeared in the darkness.

Yet Chick Gridley had come nearer to making a great discovery than he dreamed of.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABDUCTORS.

Chick Gridley had not been gone from the place half an hour when a low whistle sounded from the darkness out beyond the building, and the man who had ordered Chick to move on came again to the door.

He put his fingers to his lips and answered the whistle.

Two men appeared from the darkness.

The larger bore something in his arms.

If Chick had been near and watching now he might have discovered that one of these men—the larger of the two—was Neil Burdock, and that the other was his companion, whom Chick had seen in the ice cream parlor. But Chick had returned to the town and did not make this interesting discovery.

Chick might have seen, too, if he had been lying near and his eyes had been keen, that the burden which one of the men carried was a child of three or four years of age; a child that seemed to be either unconscious or strangely silent.

“Open the door!” growled Burdock, as he came up with his burden.

It was opened and he passed inside.

“Here, Sandy,” he said, speaking to his companion, “give us the shine of yer glim.”

The man called Sandy pulled a bull’s-eye lantern

from his pocket, slipped the slide that covered the eye, and flashed the light over the place.

It was a rough interior, being a portion of a hay barn which held hay and other feed for the cattle which Chick Gridley had heard bellowing.

If Chick had been outside now with his eye applied to the keyhole of the door, or to a crack, he might have seen other interesting things.

He might have seen Neil Burdock lay the little girl down on some hay there and draw a whisky flask from his pocket.

“I had to give her a good smack to close her jaw,” he said, grimly, as he proceeded to pry her teeth open with the blade of a knife and pour a few drops of the liquor between her lips.

“But I don’t think I hurt her much. She’ll come round bimeby.”

The man called Sandy reached out his hand for the bottle, but Neil put it back in his own pocket.

“Naw yer don’t!” he grunted. “Nobody gits any booze till we’ve turned this trick, see!”

He knelt down by the side of the child and began to chafe her hands roughly with his large palms.

“What if she’s kicked the bucket?” said Sandy.

Before answering him Neil Burdock turned to the man who had interviewed Chick Gridley.

“Chalkeye, you better go outside and nose round a little. Might be somebody spotted us and follered us, though I don’t think it.”

“There was a kid come ’long here a while ago,” volunteered Chalkeye. “He’d been down by the ball ground where the game’s to be played to-morrow.”

“I ain’t talkin’ ’bout kids; I’m thinkin’ of cops. You go out an’ smell round a little.”

He turned again to his work of restoring the child when Chalkeye had disappeared.

“Sandy,” he said, answering now the other’s question, “if the kid’s croaked, it’d mean hangin’ fer us, if we was caught; otherwise, if we was caught, it’d only be the pen at the worst. But as fer the swag that we’ve asked fer, I reckon we could git that jist the same whether she’s livin’ er dead. Still, I’d rather have her livin’.”

Inasmuch as Sandy could not get a drink, he now pulled out a black pipe and a bag of smoking tobacco.

“Kill it!” growled Burdock. “No smokin’ ’ere. Did youse t’ink this was a boiler fact’ry? This is a hay barn!”

“Well, what am I t’ be allowed to do?” grumbled Sandy.

“Set down by the wall an’ talk to yerself in whis-

pers fer amusement, if youse want to; but no smokin', an' no drinkin'. An' the glim goes out in another minute, as soon as I git this kid's breathin' works in runnin' order ag'in."

"Is a gent goin' to be allowed to chew?" said Sandy, with grim humor, as he drew some plug tobacco from his inner coat pocket.

A piece of paper fluttered down out of the pocket and caught the eye of Neil Burdock.

"Wot's that?"

"The copy."

"The copy of the notice you writ and left in the house?"

"Yes."

Burdock looked at it, as Sandy picked it up.

"If yer dyin' fer amusement youse might read that to me, while I'm exertin' myself here. Mebbe the sound of the words will help to bring the kid back, too."

Sandy spread the paper out on his knee and looked it over by the light of the bull's-eye.

"It's bad scratched up," he said, "for I wrote it over two or three times before I could git it to suit; but here it is."

Then he read:

"MR. JACOB POWERS: We've got your little girl. We don't mean any harm to her, and won't do her none unless you put the detectives and cops after us. If you do that, look out—she won't live twenty-four hours. Put ten thousand dollars under the stone at the foot of the big elm that stands in the pasture east of town—the pasture on the James Boggin place—and the girl will be returned to you safe and sound. Put it there at nine o'clock to-morrow evening. Remember that if any tricks are tried the child dies. We mean business."

"That ain't bad, Sandy! It ought to bring the swag. Hello! the kids comin' to."

He continued to chafe at the child's hands and body.

"Sandy, if you'd had as much sense as you look to have, you'd 'a' burnt that, instead of keepin' it. But you can't burn it in here now. A clever cove never leaves things like that as tracks behind him."

Mamie Powers, the little girl, opened her eyes at last, and stared around.

She started up in alarm, when she saw the bull's-eye lantern, the rough place she was in, and the men beside her.

Burdock fished into his pocket for a stick of red candy.

"'Ere, take this!" he grunted. "No cryin' now!

You're wit' friends, see! We're goin' to treat ye like a little lady. We're goin' to make a good bed fer ye in the hay upstairs, and you'll sleep there like a top."

"But I—I want my mamma!"

"Well, we're goin' to take ye to her, too, jist as soon as it's daylight. We found you in the yard, and it was rainin' so hard we couldn't git ye back into the house, so we brought you 'ere where it's nice an' dry."

She drew back in fright, for she saw that this was the man who had struck her.

"I wan't my mamma!" she wailed.

"Well, kid, you can't have her now! But we're goin' to take ye back to her soon's we can, an' that's a fact."

Chalkeye came in from outside, reporting all clear.

"Show us the way upstairs," Burdock commanded.

He caught the child up in his strong arms in spite of her tears and protests, and Sandy took up the lantern.

Then Chalkeye led the way along the dim passage until he came to a ladder that reached into the regions above.

Up there a large barn loft was seen, more than half filled with hay; and at the further end of it, well behind the heaped-up hay, a place had been made in the hay, which was half as large as a small room.

It was to this spot that Chalkeye piloted, with the men following close at his heels.

"Yes, this is the place," said Burdock, showing he had been there before. "Now, go outside, and keep watch. You reck'lect the signals?"

Chalkeye went away, and Sandy "doused the glim"; then darkness reigned in that old barn beyond the outskirts of the city of Cardiff, and no sounds were to be heard outside save those made by the nearby cattle.

Chalkeye paced up and down in front of the door where he had met Chick Gridley, ready to give an alarm in case of need.

He was the keeper of this place, hired to look after the cattle and feed them.

The owners of the cattle were shippers, who were holding them there for a few days.

It was a place not likely to be visited by anyone save the shippers, and there was not one chance in a thousand that they would climb up into the haymow.

The rôle that the man called Chalkeye was playing now shows to what depths drink will sometimes bring a man.

A few years before he had been rather an honest fellow; but he began to drink, and to neglect his work.

He lost his job after a while, and found it hard to get another. But when he could get money for

nothing else, he seemed always able to get a little for drink.

Then he began to be arrested for drunkenness; and several times was sent to prison for short terms for intoxication.

That soon lost him what self-respect he had left; and the road to any manner of evil that offered a little money was not far away, after that.

A week or so before, he had been given the job of caring for these cattle; and then, falling in the way of Neil Burdock, in the saloon already mentioned, whisky and money had again tempted him to a fall.

The very name of Chalkeye was of itself a brand of his later years of worthlessness and infamy.

In a drunken fight he had been injured in one eye; and afterward it showed white, with the sight nearly destroyed. From that time on he was Chalkeye.

Up in the haymow, after a period of tears and frantic clamor, Mamie Powers had fallen asleep.

As for the villains who had abducted her, they did not dare to trust Chalkeye too far; in fact, they almost feared to trust each other.

Sandy came down and walked about with Chalkeye in front of the barn. It was the understanding that the next day it was to be Neil Burdock's turn to do the watching, while Sandy and Chalkeye were to sleep, more or less.

With the first glimmer of day Sandy dispatched Chalkeye into the city to get copies of the morning papers.

When he came back the sun was rising, and he brought not only papers, but something in the way of food, for Chalkeye was the forager for this party of abductors.

He had not taken a drop of liquor that morning. Knowledge of the peril he was in had kept him from doing that.

Sandy and Burdock devoured the papers eagerly, cursing at some of the things they saw there, and laughing at others.

One thing which greatly amused them was a report that the police had struck the trail of the abductors going west along the railroad, and were following it.

Yet, shrewd as these men were, they were not shrewd enough to know that this was but a bluff on the part of the detective force to throw them off the scent.

The police had struck no such trail, but were searching the city of Cardiff from end to end, believing that the abductors had not left the place.

CHAPTER VII.

MACK REMINGTON IN HIS ELEMENT.

The excitement in the city of Cardiff that morning, when the papers appeared with their reports of the abduction of little Mamie Powers, was something tremendous in its character.

Jacob Powers was a reputable business man, of considerable wealth, as is shown by the fact of the abduction of his child. He had, also, many friends and acquaintances in the city, and his family was well known and respected.

The reports of the abduction, and of what the police were doing and expecting to do, were read with avidity, and the people talked of nothing else, in their homes or on the streets, or in the cars that carried them to their places of business.

The night had been a strenuous one for Mack Remington. He had joined the force of reporters working for the *Guardian*, and some of the things which appeared in the *Guardian* that morning had come from Mack's pencil.

It was in Mack's report that the story of Ned Skeen's encounter with the burglar appeared, and of the strange telegraphy heard in an ice cream parlor by a member of the Cranford baseball nine, and of how certain Cranford baseball boys had followed two suspicious characters until they lost them.

Mack had secured a "beat" here, and he felt rather proud of it.

In the sporting columns of the same paper Mack had also been given a chance to say some things favorable to the nine from Cranford, which was to play Cardiff on their grounds in Cardiff that afternoon. And the nine had the pleasure of reading their names there, Mack's, of course, being among them.

In this bit of sporting news Mack recalled to the minds of the readers of the *Guardian* the fact, which they were in no danger of forgetting, that when Cranford had played Cardiff there before, on the invitation of Cardiff, at the time of the big fair which the city held in honor of its fiftieth anniversary, no one in Cardiff had thought the Cranford boys could win, yet they had won the game by a surprising score.

Of course, Mack was clever enough not to say that this wonderful performance might be repeated again that afternoon; but he did hint that the Cardiff nine would need to do good work, for the Cranford boys, "under their brilliant leader, Jack Lightfoot," were in fighting shape and in fighting spirit.

Mack thought that looked rather well in print—"their brilliant leader, Jack Lightfoot." He had not

always approved of Jack, but recently he had come to be one of his strongest admirers.

Nor did Mack fail to dilate on the fact that Tom Lightfoot, one of the Cranford players, was the young fellow who had made the wonderful balloon ascension from the fair grounds at the time of the previous ball game, and the daring and heroic descent from the clouds in the parachute, thus saving his own life and the life of the child of the regular aëronaut, the child having been carried away in the balloon with Tom, the balloon bursting while it was high over the earth.

Mack had been able to get a half column of snappy stuff out of this rehearsal.*

As soon as Jack Lightfoot learned that Ned Skeen had been seriously hurt, he went down to the Powers residence, with Lafe and Tom, to see Ned and learn more about it.

After being admitted to the room where Ned was lying comfortably on a cot, Susie Powers came in to greet them. Her face was even paler than Ned's, which was surely white enough, in spite of its tan.

"Fellows, this is tough!" said Ned, in a subdued tone.

"You haven't learned anything?" asked Susie, whose one thought was of her sister who had disappeared.

She had hoped something had been learned, and she went away to tell her mother, whose constant and frantic appeals were for the latest news.

"The doctor says I can't think of going into the game this afternoon," said Ned, when she had gone out of the room. "I turn sick and giddy whenever I try to get up, and that will keep me out of the game, even without the doctor's orders. I suppose I'm a villain for even thinking of the game, after what's happened to the family here; but I've been thinking of it, just the same. I'll try to get out and see it, if nothing else. I can sit in the benches, maybe, and yell when you fellows wallop Cardiff."

Then he turned back to the subject of the abduction.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT CAME OF CHICK GRIDLEY'S PRYING.

When the game was called that afternoon, in the fair grounds, where the boys had met Cardiff on a previous occasion, the search by the police for Mamie Powers was still going on.

*For the story of this most interesting and thrilling performance, see No. 23, "Jack Lightfoot's Talisman," which you will also find to be one of the best stories in the series.

Yet less than a stone's throw from the fair-ground fence stood the weather-beaten barn, with the cattle pens by it, where Mamie Powers was held by Neil Burdock and his pals; and Burdock and his pals could see the crowds of people gathering for the ball game, by peering through some cracks, and could hear the yells that arose when the game opened up.

The child had, by this time, been scared into a state of complete subjection. She did not know where she was, and fear held her quiet under the threats of these rough men.

The police were looking everywhere but in the right place; the fact that the old barn was so near the town, and the additional fact that a man was passing in and out of it at intervals, attending to the cattle, kept them from thinking of it as a place of refuge for the abductors.

In carrying out this abduction, Neil Burdock had gone on the time-worn maxim, which says:

"When you hide, hide in a place where no one will think of looking for you!"

Ned Skeen did not appear in the players' benches, being still confined to the house.

Jack, therefore, put Mack Remington in his place at short.

The Cardiffs had gone first to the bat, and the lists of the two teams stood as follows:

CARDIFF.	CRANFORD.
Ray Gilbert, c.	Tom Lightfoot, 2d b.
Tony Lamb, rf.	Brodie Strawn, 1st b.
John Brown, 1st b.	Nat Kimball, rf.
Bradford Camp, 2d b.	Lafe Lampton, c.
Leslie Lee, ss.	Mack Remington, ss.
Tige Murphy, p.	Phil Kirtland, 3d b.
Linn Corbett, 3d b.	Wilson Crane, cf.
Tom Spencer, lf.	Jubal Marlin, lf.
Cave Clifford, cf.	Jack Lightfoot, p.

One of the things which Jack discovered, before the game had proceeded far, and Mack Remington let a ball go through his fingers, was that Mack was in no condition for good baseball work that day—the night had been altogether too strenuous for him.

Kate Strawn and Nellie Conner had come over that morning to attend the game; but when they learned of the terrible tragedy in the home of Susie Powers they gave over all thoughts of the ball game, and went down to see Susie and stay with her that afternoon.

But the mascot, Rex, was there, strung with the ribbons which the girls had wound round him, and he occupied the benches with the Cranford players when they were at the bat, and was generally pretty close

to Jack Lightfoot when the Cranford boys occupied the field.

There was not so big a crowd out on this day as when the great fair and balloon ascension had drawn the people by thousands, yet the attendance was reasonably large. A thing which doubtless kept some away was the abduction of Mamie Powers.

Jack and his friends had spent most of the forenoon in a fruitless endeavor to aid the police, accompanied in this by Chick Gridley, who had not been able to do any more than they. Chick was on the grounds now.

When the game opened up, Jack had the satisfaction of striking out Ray Gilbert, the captain and pitcher of the Cardiff nine, who was the first man at the bat; and then hit a man with the ball and gave him a free pass to first.

Cardiff brought in one run in that inning, and Cranford scored a goose egg; which was not a very cheering start for the Cranford boys.

Phil Kirtland was in good spirits that day. After the previous game at Cardiff, in which he had been laid off by Jack for some sharp talk, he had felt sore and disgruntled for a time; but that had long before passed away, and on this day he was ready to do his best for Cranford.

With all his faults there were some mighty fine traits in Phil, and there could be no doubt that he was a good ball player.

The second and third innings saw some exciting work; for the ball was lined out by each side and there was some fine running and fielding, with a score or two brought in, which set the fans to howling.

Neil Burdock, up in the barn, which overlooked the fair grounds, had an eye glued to a crack a good deal of the time, watching the game, and also watching to see that no one came near the barn without his knowledge.

By and by he saw some boys come through the fence, led by Chick Gridley; that is, they seemed to be led by Chick, though in fact they merely followed, hearing the cattle and seeing Chick going in that direction.

Chick had taken a sudden notion to see if the man he had talked with the previous night was still there.

Chalkeye met him at the door.

"Clear out!" he said, gruffly.

Chick had not been able to see Chalkeye very well in the darkness, but he recognized the voice.

"I just thought I'd come over and take a look at the cattle," said Chick, smoothly.

"Clear out!" Chalkeye ordered, with a show of anger.

"But can't we see the cattle?"

"No, you can't! Go on back into the ball grounds!"

Now, there seemed to be no real good reason why Chick, or anyone else, might not look at the cattle in the pens at one side of the barn; and if Chalkeye had been clever he would have let Chick look at them without protest.

The suspicion still clung to Chick's mind that the man he had supposed to be Sandy—of course, Chick did not then know what the man was called—had come out of that saloon in Cardiff with hat slouched over his eyes as a disguise, and that he—Chick—had trailed him to this barn.

It had been Chick's intention to look the barn over, if he had found no one barring the way.

"I'd like to take a look at those cattle," he urged; "I don't see any harm in that."

"You git out of here!" cried Chalkeye, coming toward him and picking up a club. "Git; or I'll bu'st yer head open!"

The boys, frightened by this, turned back toward the fence.

Chick retreated toward the fence; but he had seen that from the other side the cattle pens could be approached, as well as from this; and, instead of passing through the gap of the fence into the ball grounds, he continued on round until he reached the gate on that side.

The cattle held there were vicious-looking creatures, such as are sometimes brought from the Western ranges.

They were hungry, too, and thirsty, for Chalkeye had not been attending to his duties very well.

Two of them came toward the gate before which Chick had stopped, and but for the gate they would have lunged at him.

Chick stood looking them over, as if he were a judge of cattle as well as of clothing; but he was thinking all the time of the man he had trailed from the Cardiff saloon, and of the truculent manner of the keeper of these cattle.

Turning from the bellowing cattle, he began to scrutinize the barn.

Chick was really displaying now some of the better instincts of the detective fraternity, of which it was his ambition to become a member. He was showing persistence, and he was trying to reason out a conclusion from all he had seen and heard.

Certain facts were plain.

The first was that some one, supposed to be a burglar, had been frightened from the Powers residence early the previous night.

The second was that a man called Neil Burdock, known to be a scoundrel both by his appearance and by his deeds, had been given a tapped "telegraphic" message in the ice cream parlor, which had been read by Mack Remington. That message, the boys thought, and Jack Lightfoot believed, connected those men with the attempted burglary.

These men had been lost in the saloon; and from that saloon Chick fancied he had trailed one of them to this barn.

To this was added the startling fact that Mamie Powers had been abducted that night from her home, and one of the abductors, as testified by Ned Skeen, was Neil Burdock.

"I'm going to get into that barn some way," was Chick's thought, when he had reasoned thus far. "It strikes me as funny that the man in charge here should be so cranky about anyone coming near the place!"

He looked the barn over again very carefully.

"I'm going to ask Jack Lightfoot to help me. I'll tell him about this fellow and how he spoke to me, and see what he thinks of it. Jack's pretty level-headed."

Chick's thoughts were cut short by the appearance of Chalkeye on that side.

He had seen Chick there, and was in a rage.

"I told you to clear out!" he shouted.

He came up behind Chick, between him and the

ball-ground fence, and Chick began to think that perhaps he had got himself into rather close quarters.

He saw, however, that the man was not likely to be very lively on his feet.

"I'm just looking at the cattle," said Chick. "You wouldn't let me through on that side, and so I came on round here."

There was a certain coolness in Chick's tones and a certain devil-may-care smile on his sandy face that threw Chalkeye into a furious temper.

"You'll git, or I'll knock you down!" he shouted, and hurled the club straight at Chick's head.

Chick dodged it by ducking, and it shot through the bars of the gate and struck one of the bellowing animals.

Instantly, there was a wild charge.

The enraged steer came at Chick with lowered head, seemingly so angry that he did not see the gate; and, striking it heavily, tore it from its fastenings.

There was a wild bellowing mix-up of cattle in the pens, as others came trampling after this leader; and Chick, turning tail, fled at about as lively a pace as he had ever footed it for the ball-ground fence, with the forward steer right after him, reaching for his coat tails with its sharp horns.

Chick did not tarry to investigate the fate of Chalkeye.

He saw the hole in the fence, and, reaching it, he began to writhe through.

The steer was not two yards behind him at the moment, and it lunged again.

Chick "faded away" through the opening, falling on his hands and feet in a panic inside the ball grounds; and saw the steer's head and neck come through, as it struck the opening where but a moment before he had been.

"One strike!"

It seemed almost comical to hear the call of the umpire at that juncture, but it came to Chick quite distinctly.

He scrambled to his feet to continue his flight, and then saw that the steer had driven its head and shoulders so tightly into the opening that it could not get easily forward or back.

It was trying to get forward.

Chick danced on for a few yards at a lively pace, to get out of the way, and then saw its huge bulk and weight smash heavily through the fence.

Then Chick turned and ran again, at a two-forty gate toward the diamond.

The wildest excitement now took place in the ball grounds.

Women and children screamed, and men and boys ran to get out of the way of the steer.

The play on the diamond stopped as if by mutual consent.

The steer deviated when it reached the diamond, and lowered its head to charge at the umpire, who chanced to be the person immediately before it.

Jack Lightfoot was standing near him, and had but a moment before been waiting for a ball, with bat in his hand.

Seeing the peril of the umpire, Jack now leaped at the steer, swinging Old Wagon Tongue.

With a terrific crack he brought the heavy bat down across the steer's nose, bringing a bellow of pain.

The brute now abandoned the umpire and made for Jack.

He sprang aside with the leap of an athlete, and again struck, once more hitting the steer on the nose.

The pain of this second blow fairly blinded it; and, instead of trying to spring at him again, it went on across the diamond with bellowing leaps, stampeding everything before it.

The stunning pain had taken all the fight out of it, and it now made for the open gate.

The gatekeeper fled, and the steer plowed through to the outside, where it disappeared in a whirl of dust.

As for the other steers, Chalkeye had been able to turn them back at the fence and drive them into the pens, and he was now engaged in trying to make secure the gate which had been broken down.

But there had been a lively panic for a few minutes in the ball grounds, and there can be no doubt that, had it not been for the quick and heroic work of Jack Lightfoot, some one would have been killed, or seriously hurt.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW MAN AT SHORT.

Chick Gridley dropped down with a heaving sigh into the benches, where some of his acquaintances were gathering, now that their scare was over.

He turned to Jack, who came up at that moment.

"I've got to tell you about that," said Chick.

"Haven't time to hear it just now," said Jack. "The umpire wants the game to go right on, to quiet the people. But there's a thing you can do. I was looking for you a while ago and sent some of the boys to find you. Mack Remington has sprained his ankle, and I haven't a man to put in his place. Mack was the only man we had to put in Skeen's place at short, and now he's ruined for the day."

Jack explained, however, that in spite of his twisted ankle Mack had stuck heroically at his post through one inning and declared his willingness to go on; but Mack could not run, nor move around lively, and the Cardiff boys, knowing it, were putting the balls through short all the time.

Five innings had been played, and the Cardiffs were three runs in the lead, with a score of six to three in their favor; and that lead of three had all been made in the last inning, after they discovered and took advantage of Mack's condition.

"I've spoken to the umpire," said Jack, "and to the captain of the other team."

All the boys were grouping round Jack and Chick now, listening.

"Oh, you've got to go in!" Lafe urged.

"Sure thing!" cried little Nat Kimball. "We'll lose this game the way things are going."

Nat always felt rather proud when he was permitted to come into the game and seemed to feel that the responsibility of the whole thing rested on his shoulders. In a sense, it was a good feeling to have; and Nat could always be depended on to do the very best that was in him for Cranford.

Ray Gilbert, the captain of the Cardiff nine, came into the crowd, with some of his players, among them being the pitcher, Tige Murphy.

"Are you going to ring him in on us?" Murphy demanded.

"He's a regular member of the nine," said Jack. "I talked this thing over a while ago with your captain and the umpire."

"But I say he ain't!" said Murphy.

Jack's face took on color and his gray-blue eyes flashed.

"Will you kindly tell me why he isn't, after you've heard my explanation? Chick's on the road now, traveling for a clothing house, but his home is in Cranford. In the early part of last school year he attended the high school, was a member of our athletic club, and was a regular player on our football team and our baseball team. Has he lost his rights as a member because he has gone on the road as a traveling salesman during the summer months?"

"Oh, course he has!"

"He is still a member of the nine and lives in Cranford."

"Oh, this is just a game, to git him into the play!" cried Murphy, with a sneer.

Jack turned to the captain.

"You see the condition of our nine. Our shortstop has lamed his ankle, and the man who plays short regularly for us was hurt last night, as you all know, and is not able to be on the ground at all. Nat was the only one of our regular substitutes who came over here to-day, and I've put him in right field, to take the place of Mack Remington, whom I put in at short. Now, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to force us to play this game with Mack Remington at short, when you can see for yourselves that he's hardly able to walk?"

"Oh, come off!" grunted Murphy. "How do we know that he's so bad hurt?"

"I'm a liar, am I?" said Mack, firing up in a manner to make his round, red cheeks glow.

Jack continued, speaking to the captain, Ray Gilbert.

"All we ask is a fair deal. Let us put in this new man at short, and the game can go on with some chance that we can do something."

But, to tell the truth, that was one thing Ray Gilbert was not anxious for.

When Cardiff challenged Cranford the first time to

play on these grounds it was because they could not get a nine of greater prominence to play them on that day, which was the closing day of their fair. Cranford had made a strong reputation in the little Four-Town League, and for that reason had been selected; but not a man of the Cardiff nine dreamed for a moment that Cranford could beat them that day.

Yet Cranford had defeated them, in a clean, square game of baseball.

The Cardiff nine had never been able to get over that. It still stung like nettles.

That defeat was the only reason why they had challenged Cranford a second time. They wanted to wipe out the old score.

They had told themselves that it was "luck" which had given Cranford the victory before.

They had justification in this. "Luck" does queer things sometimes. Now and then strong teams of really capable players are beaten by nines much their inferiors.

But in this game, until Mack Remington hurt his ankle, Cranford had held the score even, making it up to the end of the fourth inning three to three, when Mack had gone to pieces and three runs had been made by Cardiff on hits that had been driven through short and which he could not handle.

Ray Gilbert had seemed, when Jack talked to him before, to be willing to permit the Cranford captain to put a new man in at short.

But Tige Murphy had come up with his objections, and other players had added theirs, until now the Cardiff captain was in a wavering and uncertain mood.

"It won't look well," said Jack, persuasively, "if you make us play a crippled man at short. Even if you defeat us, which, of course, in that case you will, it won't be much of an honor to you. Do you really think it will?"

This was an argument that told.

The Cardiff captain knew that reporters of the Cardiff papers were there, and that the thing would be known to the public. He saw one of those reporters standing in a listening attitude not far away.

Jack Lightfoot had seen him, too and had made sure that his words would reach him.

"Oh, let 'em put their new man in!" said Leslie Lee, who played short for Cardiff.

Gilbert took Tige Murphy and some of his other men aside.

The umpire was watching all this impatiently and was growing tired of the delay.

"Settle that matter quick, you fellows!" he called out. "This game is going on in mighty short order."

"I kick against it!" Jack heard Tige Murphy say.

What Gilbert and the others said came to Jack as a mere hum of voices.

At last Gilbert came back.

"Put him on," he said. "We fellows can beat you all right, anyway. We hardly think this is a square deal, but put him on."

Jack knew, of course, that it is the privilege of every captain to protest in this manner, and he disregarded it altogether.

"Get into Mack's clothes, quick," he said to Chick Gridley. "There's a dressing room right back there at one side of the grand stand."

Mack hobbled with Chick to this dressing room, and in a little while Chick Gridley came out attired in Mack's baseball suit, which fitted as if it had been made for him.

"Oh, say," whispered Chick, greatly elated, and speaking to Jack as he came again upon the diamond, "this is great! I didn't want to say anything about it while all that hot air was going on, for fear they wouldn't let me play, but I've been playing more or less all summer, in the different towns where I've been, and as luck would have it I've usually played short. You'll find that I'm there, when the horsehide comes tumbling in my direction."

"Play ball!" said the umpire, in a grating voice, for his patience had been worn to a thread.

CHAPTER X.

THE GAME PROCEEDS.

Tige Murphy was in an angry mood when Jack, with bat in hand, faced him again from the rubber.

Tige was a good pitcher, with speed and good curves.

He had already secured one strike, and he was now wildly anxious to strike Jack out.

Jack knew this, of course, and when Murphy handed him a wide one he coolly let it go by.

The next Murphy put closer in, for that had been pronounced a "ball"; and this Jack hammered out in fine style, sending it over the head of the third baseman.

It was a whistler, far out into the field, and Jack ran like a greyhound down to first, and then on to second, before the ball could be fielded in.

Following Jack at the bat came his cousin Tom.

Murphy's red face was redder than ever, as he turned to pitch to the plate.

"But he hasn't got home yet!" was his thought.

Crack!

Tom Lightfoot lifted the first pitched ball and sent it as a grass cutter into deep right.

Jack flew for third, while Tom went like a house afire down to first.

"Go—go!" screamed Nat Kimball, who had run down to third to coach.

Jack turned third base, and started at wild speed for the home plate.

Before he had gone far he saw the ball coming in, shooting up like a rocket out of right field, sent by Tony Lamb, who was a good, strong thrower.

"Go!" yelled Kimball.

"Slide!" howled Lafe from the benches.

The excitement at the instant was tremendous.

All had forgotten the scare of a few minutes before and the long delay while the captains talked and wrangled.

Jack threw himself forward in a great slide.

Plunk!

The ball smashed into the catcher's mitt, the catcher being Ray Gilbert, the captain of the Cardiff nine.

He leaped to put it on Jack, but Jack's outstretched fingers were on the rubber.

"Safe!" shouted the umpire, as excited as any fan there; for the thing had been quick, thrilling and spectacular.

The catcher straightened up now and lined the ball to second.

"Safe on second!" said the umpire, for reliable Tom had gained that bag.

Brodie Strawn, the batting slugger of the Cranford nine, took up Old Wagon Tongue, and the Cranford fans cheered.

"Brodie will line it out!" one of them howled, enthusiastically. "Hurrah for Cranford!"

The "mascot," having become as excited as the boys, though it can hardly be claimed that he understood as well as they what was going on, barked loudly; and again the fans cheered.

Tige Murphy, after twisting the ball round in his fingers and watching Tom, shot the ball at the plate.

Brodie, who was a patient waiter, let it go by.

It came in again, in the same way.

"Two balls!"

Again it came over, and again Brodie let it pass.

"Three balls!"

It began to seem that Tige Murphy was so much afraid of Brodie that he would give him a pass to first.

But he got the next ball in, putting it low.

Brodie lifted it, in a great drive into center, his favorite batting ground.

Though the center fielder had got well out, in anticipation of this, Brodie was a good place hitter, and put it in a section that made the fielder run for it.

Tom Lightfoot came home, amid the howls of the enthusiasts, and Brodie took second.

Nat Kimball now, to his great joy, knocked a ball down toward second, and flew for first bag.

But it was fatal to Brodie, who had played well off second.

Tige Murphy, with a wild jump that he made so quickly that he deserved the hand-clapping and cheers it brought, got the ball and slammed it to second. Seeing he could not safely take third, Brodie had tried to get back to second. The ball beat Brodie by just enough margin to make it a question, and the umpire declared him out.

But Nat Kimball was on first, as happy, Jubal said, "as a 'tater bug on a 'tater vine."

Nat fairly danced a hornpipe, when he saw Lafe Lampton come to the batter's place lugging Old Wagon Tongue.

Then Nat began to play off first, coached by Tom Lightfoot.

When Brodie went out, two men were out, and the situation was now ticklish.

Tige Murphy was so much afraid of Lafe's batting abilities that he gave him four balls and a pass to first, thus sending little Nat on to second, where he danced in glee.

Then the new man, Chick Gridley, came to the bat. Jack watched Chick anxiously from the benches.

Chick had been a good player the previous season, but Jack did not know how he would do now.

However, Chick got a hit on the second pitched ball.

But it forced Nat, and he was thrown out at third.

The side was out.

Yet two runs had been brought in, thus reducing the lead of the Cardiff team.

The score now stood—Cardiff, six; Cranford, five.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LUCKY FIND.

Chick Gridley was soon given a chance to show what he could do.

The first man at the bat hammered one of Jack's hot pitches and sent it skipping to short.

Perhaps he was testing the new man.

If so, he must have been satisfied in finding out what the new man could do.

Chick seemed to pitch at the ball as it came toward him, scooping it up as it bounced, and threw with lightning quickness to Brodie Strawn on first.

Reliable Brodie held the ball, and the ball had beaten the runner.

"Runner out!" shouted the umpire.

Jack struck out the next man.

The third batter to come to the plate secured a hit into center.

He took two bags on it; and then, believing it safe to do so, and urged by the coach, he tried for third.

The fielder threw to third, sending the ball high, but very swiftly.

It went over the head of the third baseman.

But Chick Gridley was backing the baseman, and secured the ball.

Seeing that he could not safely make third, the runner had already started back for second; but Chick

lined the ball hot to Tom Lightfoot, and Tom tagged his man.

"Three men out—side out!" called the umpire.

It had been done quickly.

"Gridley, you're all right!" cried Jack, walking up to him and patting him on the shoulder. "We think we'll have to tie you and keep you in Cranford, so that we can use you in every game. You've been learning some good baseball while you were away."

Chick's sandy face was a deep red now, and the thin, sandy lines that served for eyebrows seemed to have gone out of sight, hidden in the red of his face.

"Thanks!" he said, airily.

Nevertheless, this praise from Jack, and the praise from the other boys was, naturally, very pleasing to him.

"Now, we'll even the score," said Jack, confidently.

Phil Kirtland was first at the bat now, and stepped into place, looking very straight and handsome, and was given a round of applause by the Cranford fans.

Phil was a good man with the stick, and he cracked a liner out of the box and went to second.

Wilson Crane, however, failed to connect this time with Tige Murphy's curves.

Then Jubal came up, swinging his two bats, and dropping one, held up Old Wagon Tongue.

"Give me an easy one!" he begged, as he prepared for his "south paw" swing, and everybody snickered, for that was Jubal's constant cry.

But Tige Murphy, having gotten over his anger somewhat, had pulled himself together, and was again pitching great ball.

He had already struck Wilson out, and now he sent in such curves that the best Jubal could do was to pop up a fly, which the catcher captured.

Two men were out, when Jack Lightfoot came to the bat.

Phil Kirtland was playing daringly off second, watched closely by both pitcher and catcher.

Tige Murphy was so much afraid of Jack Lightfoot as a batter that he again began to put the balls wide, and had "balls" called against him.

One of these pitched balls went so wide that it popped off the catcher's mitt.

Phil Kirtland, watching for his chance, flew for third, with the fans roaring and everybody thrilled to high excitement.

Tige now put a straight one over, but it was so close in that Jack saw if he hit it he would have to strike it with the handle of the bat.

It was a "strike."

Then, to the surprise of the fielders, who had gone well back, expecting he would line it out, Jack bunted down in front of the plate.

He had signaled to Phil that he meant to do so, and when the bunt came Phil was already well off third bag; and now he went like a whirlwind for home.

In making that bunt Jack had fooled the catcher as well as the fielders.

Both the catcher and the pitcher ran to get the ball.

Seeing that the pitcher was running for it, the catcher tried to get back into position to receive it; but before the pitcher could get the ball and put it in the catcher's mitt, Phil Kirtland had crossed the rubber and was safe.

And Jack?

He had taken advantage of the attempt to put out Phil and had gained first.

But Tom Lightfoot now sent up a fly, and the side went out.

Yet the score had been tied, it being now six to six.

CHAPTER XII.

CHICK AGAIN SHOWS WHAT HE CAN DO.

In the first half of the eighth inning Chick Gridley again showed what he could do at short.

Jack had struck out one man; when Tige Murphy, who was himself something of a slugger at the bat, as well as elsewhere, caught one of Jack's pitches and drove it hot toward the outfield.

It seemed that it would go well over the head of Gridley, but with the smash of the bat Gridley seemed to bound into the air like a rubber man, and snatched down the swift liner.

Then the Cranford fans howled their enthusiasm, while Tige Murphy, who had started to first, stopped and seemed dazed.

"Great work!" Jack shouted to Gridley.

"Chick, you're all right!" Brodie called from first.

And that praise from Brodie Strawn, who seldom said anything of that kind, was even more valuable to Chick than Jack's encomium, for Jack often praised the good work of his men.

Chick's sandy face again showed that deep red—that pleasurable red—in which the thin lines of his eyebrows lost themselves.

"Oh, I'm here!" he answered; "I said I'd be, and I'm trying to make good!"

Tige Murphy was fuming.

"Yes, and if the captain and the other fellows had backed me you wouldn't be playing short!" was his thought.

Yet even Tige Murphy knew that Chick Gridley, as a member of Jack's nine who had never lost his membership, was fully entitled to play in the nine that day.

Jack seemed to "fall down on himself now," or "go up in a balloon," as the boys say, for he let men get bases.

Two men were on bases—one on second and one on third, when Cave Clifford came to the bat.

Clifford was known as a sure, hard hitter, and it began to seem that Cardiff would bring in one run and perhaps two.

This would again put them in the lead, and it might give them the game.

Clifford connected with Jack's third ball, pulling it a little away from short toward third.

Chick Gridley was again on hand.

Though the ball came low, he caught it, scooping it almost up off the ground.

The runner at second and the runner at third had started at the crack of the bat, being sure that the shortstop, clever as he had shown himself to be, could not get that ball.

The runner who had tried to go home was now forced, of course, to come back to third; and with a flirt of his hand Chick sent the ball to Phil Kirtland, who was third baseman, and two men were put out—the batter, who had been caught out, and the runner who had failed to remain on third.

It was done so quickly, too, that the fans stared for an instant, then rose in their places and yelled like wild men.

The Cardiffs were thus retired in the first half of the ninth without making a run, when it seemed sure they would make at least one; and the score still stood even.

The Cranford boys came whooping in from the field.

"Boys, we can do 'em now!" said Jack, with enthusiasm. "One run does it, and we ought to get that easily."

But Brodie Strawn, popping up one of the long flies that he was rather noted for at times, was caught out; and Nat Kimball, who followed him, was struck out.

Two men were out.

But Lafe was to come to the bat.

The boys pinned their faith to Lafe.

He came up smiling, and setting Old Wagon Tongue on end went through his "charm" performance of cracking open a peanut and eating it.

Sometimes that made the pitcher laugh and worked to Lafe's advantage.

But not this time.

Tige Murphy was in no laughing mood. He saw that two men were out, and if one more could be put out before a run was made there was still hope for Cardiff.

So he deliberately struck Lafe with the ball, though claiming that it was an accident, and the umpire sent Lafe to first.

This prevented one of Lafe's liners, which Murphy feared.

Then Chick Gridley came to the bat.

Now, if Chick had been as great a batter as he was a shortstop, the game might have been won right here.

But Chick fanned, fanned again, and then fanned again; and the side was out.

"Wow! a ten-inning game!" was howled; while the spectators roared with glee.

They could not get too much of this kind of ball playing.

Neil Burdock heard that yell up in the old barn, and glued his eye to one of the cracks and looked out.

Then he swore a great oath.

"The games' goin' on!" he said. "Nine innin's, and they're goin' to make it ten! Why don't they git t'rough with it and clear out?"

He felt that every moment in which the game went on and those people were so near to his hiding place was a moment of great peril to him.

He had been in a fever of anxiety ever since Chick Gridley had come fooling round the barn and the steer had escaped. He knew that must have drawn attention to the barn and the cattle, and there was no knowing how soon other fellows would come nosing along asking to see the cattle.

Chalkeye had fixed up the gate, but had not gone in pursuit of the escaped steer. Chalkeye had too much sense for that; and now stood like a bulldog at the entrance to the barn, determined that no one should go in.

He, too, had heard that cry and knew that another inning was to be played, and he was no better pleased than Neil Burdock.

Jack now went into the pitcher's box, after a few words with Lafe, who was to go behind the bat.

Lafe slowly adjusted his pad and mask and as slowly got into position.

Then he signaled to Jack, and the first ball came in, which the batter let go by.

Chick was in his place at short, ready to take any flies or grounders that came his way, and the nerve of every player of the Cranford nine was keyed to the highest notch.

But Jack Lightfoot made short work of that half of the inning.

He had got back into form again and once more had control of the spit ball.

He was finding it more and more reliable, and with every game was more a master of it.

And now with the spit ball, and with as fine pitching as was ever seen on any amateur diamond, Jack struck out his three men straight.

"Wow, it's going to be an eleven-inning game!" howled the man who had howled before.

Phil Kirtland now came first to the bat, in the second half of the inning.

Phil was so anxious this time that it made him nervous. Two strikes were called on him, but finally he drove out a ball, which the man in left field captured, bringing a ringing cheer from the Cardiff fans.

Wilson Crane thrust his long nose over the rubber and held up Old Wagon Tongue.

Wilson did better than Phil, for he got a scratch hit which took him to first.

Then Jubal Marlin came up laughing, in his usual way.

Jubal, being left-handed, was a batter that troubled Murphy, and he always disliked to see him take up the timber.

"An easy one!" said Jubal.

He received two very swift curves; but after that popped out a twisting fly, which a fielder let get away from him.

That put Wilson on second and Jubal on first, and brought Jack Lightfoot up to the rubber.

Jack's rather fair face glowed now with a hot color even through the deep tan that covered it.

We will not attempt to deny that Jack was nervous. A good deal depended on him, he knew; yet, in spite of that hot, red glow, he faced Murphy with a smile. It was a little forced, for Jack did not feel like smiling just then.

Tige Murphy saw that Jack was a bit nervous, and he began to try him with swift and slow curves.

When two strikes were called against Jack he felt his heart thumping like a drum and he knew that his hands trembled.

But the ball was coming in again—Murphy meant to make it the third strike and out!—and Jack steadied his hands and his jumping nerves, and reached for it, catching it well out toward the tip of his bat.

He had meant to drive it into deep center if he could get it, but it went sharp from the bat into deep right, which was possibly just as well.

Long-legged Wilson Crane, the fastest runner perhaps in the whole nine, was on second, and had led well off.

As soon as the bat and ball collided Wilson was flying for third.

The spectators stood up in bleachers and grand stand to see.

Tom Lightfoot, down near third, yelled for Wilson to go home, as he passed third.

The fielder was right on top of the ball now, but Wilson started for home.

Then the ball came sailing in, in a great throw for the plate.

"Go—go, you giraffe!" Tom yelled in his excitement.

Everybody was bellowing and howling.

It seemed that Wilson had never run so before. He thrust out the birdlike head that hung at the end of his long neck, and went like the wind, with his legs seeming to move with the rapidity of buggy spokes.

The ball came in, with the catcher in position to receive it.

"Slide—slide!" Tom was howling.

Wilson threw himself in a tremendous slide, plowing up the dust.

"Safe!" yelled the umpire.

And the great ten-inning game with Cardiff had been won.

Once more the young amateur nine from Cranford had come to Cardiff and had won from the Cardiff nine a victory.

Was it any wonder that the Cranford boys and the Cranford fans seemed to go suddenly wild?

They howled, they yelled, they cheered; while the mascot lifted his voice in the midst of the excitement, and frisked around gayly, with his fluttering ribbons flying.

Jack put his arms affectionately round Wilson's shoulders, fairly hugging him, he was so pleased with Wilson's great performance, and the other boys coming up told Wilson what a wonder he was.

Even Phil Kirtland, who did not like Wilson, did not withhold his meed of praise in this moment of victory.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ADVANCE ON THE BARN.

Neil Burdock uttered a fierce oath.

It was so fierce and of such malignity that Sandy,

who was lying near him on the hay, sprang up, knowing that something unusual was occurring.

Burdock had his eye glued to a crack in the upper part of the barn and was looking out toward the ball grounds.

"What is it?" Sandy asked.

"A mob of fellers comin' to look at them cattle, and they'll want to go pokin' through the barn."

Then he cursed again, roundly denouncing himself for coming to that place in the first instance and denouncing Chalkeye for letting the steer get away.

"That steer done it!" he grumbled.

He moved across the hay, and, putting his heavy head down through the opening that held the ladder, he spoke to Chalkeye, who was on guard at the door.

"Some more o' them fools comin'," he warned; "don't let 'em in."

At the head of those who were coming was Jack Lightfoot and his friends.

Chick Gridley had told his story, and it was so suggestive that Jack was convinced that an investigation of the barn was demanded.

Brodie Strawn was now at Jack's side, with the other fellows close behind, when Jack stopped in front of Chalkeye.

"We thought we'd like to take a look through the barn," he said, endeavoring to speak pleasantly.

"What fer?" growled Chalkeye.

"It will make us think of the days of our childhood down on the farm," Jack answered, with a laugh.

"You fellers clear out of here!" said Chalkeye.

He was angry, but he was also frightened, and the whisky red flush had fled from his face, making it ghastly.

Jack saw this mark of fear, and was more than ever sure that something in or about the barn demanded an inspection.

A scowl came to the dark features of Brodie Strawn.

"See here," he said, roughly, for Brodie spoke as he struck, straight out from the shoulder, "we're going into this barn; so if you know what's good for you you'll stand out of the way!"

"I'll kill the first one that tries it!" shouted Chalk-eye, and whipped out a revolver.

Both Brodie and Jack fell back when they saw the weapon, for neither relished the idea of being shot.

"What's in the barn, that makes you so determined that no one shall look into it?" Jack queried.

"There's nothin' in this barn but some hay, and over there the cattle pens; but I'm left in charge here an' I won't stand no foolin'. I've been bothered all afternoon by some o' you fellers and I'm tired of it."

He held the revolver in a menacing attitude.

Jack and his friends retreated a few steps, for the purpose of a conference.

"Clear out!" Chalkeye shouted at them.

"Fellows, what do you think of it?" Jack asked, when they had gone a few yards away.

"Well, you can see that he's in an ugly temper!" said Tom.

"Jiminy Christmas, it wouldn't hurt the barn if we went into it!" Lafe grumbled.

"It's my opinion that something is mighty crooked there," declared Chick Gridley. "It wouldn't surprise me if that little girl is held there."

"I agree with you, Chick," said Jack. "The question now is, What shall we do?"

He saw that some of the people who had witnessed the game were coming through the fence.

"There'll be enough of us to take any band of scoundrels that may be hiding in there, but"—he hesitated—"we don't want to get ourselves killed!"

He glanced at Chalkeye, and saw that he had stepped inside the doorway.

"If we were up there now we might make a rush and get him," suggested Phil Kirtland.

"The only trouble," said Jack, "and the one that makes me hesitate most, is that there may be nothing more in the barn than he says. He's in charge of it, and we've no legal right to enter it, so long as he forbids us. If we should make a rush and he should be hurt we might find ourselves in trouble. Even if he wasn't hurt the thing would be trespass."

"Send some one for the police," Nat Kimball suggested. "I'll go, if you say so."

"All right," said Jack.

Nat ran back to the ball-ground fence and vanished.

In the meantime Chalkeye, who had been acquainting those inside with the condition of things, reappeared at the door.

He had put his revolver in his pocket, but looked anxiously at the crowd of young fellows talking near.

"Clear out!" he said, in that threatening tone.

Instead of clearing out, Jack led them again toward the barn door.

"We want to have a talk with you about this."

"But I don't want to talk with you!"

The revolver came out again, and this kept some of the more timid well in the background.

But in the forefront with Jack were Tom and Lafe, Phil and Brodie, Jubal and Wilson.

"By granny, I used tew live in a haymow," said Jubal, with his wide Yankee grin, "an' I ain't seen one sense comin' intew this gol-darned country; so I'd jist like to take a peek at this un."

"Clear out!" shouted Chalkeye, swinging his weapon.

"But see here," said Jack, stepping still nearer.

A big crowd was now gathering some distance behind, and that crowd was becoming excited, for the word had gone round that the abductors had been "treed" in the barn.

Some of them knew that one of the baseball boys had started to town to summon the police.

A few of the boldest of the men now pushed forward, coming close up behind Jack and his friends.

"What's the trouble here?" one of them asked.

"We just want to look the barn over," Jack answered.

"Do you think them abductors air in there?"

Chalkeye gave a jump of alarm when he heard the words.

Jack took advantage of it, for Chalkeye for just the fraction of a second was thus put off his guard.

With a quick leap Jack crossed the intervening distance, and throwing his arms round Chalkeye pinioned his pistol hand to his side.

"Help here, fellows!" he cried.

But before even Tom Lightfoot could reach him

Jack had thrown Chalkeye and had wrested the pistol from him, and Chalkeye lay gurgling with fear in the very opening of the barn door.

Jack passed the revolver to Tom.

"Hold it," he said.

He felt on the outside of Chalkeye's pockets, and, not discovering any other weapon, released him.

Chalkeye scrambled heavily to his feet, cursing; but he was pale with fear.

"I'll have you arrested fer this," he asserted; but the threat was rather weak.

Jack felt called to justify his action both to the man he had attacked and to the crowd that swarmed near as soon as they saw that the man was disarmed.

"It's suspected that the little girl who was abducted last night may be held in this barn. That's why we want to go in. If you had been willing for us to look the barn over and had not drawn that revolver on us no trouble would have come. We're going into the barn now, and if we've made a mistake and done wrong we'll have to stand the consequences."

With this Jack stepped through the doorway, with Tom at his side and the other boys crowding right in at their heels.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CAPTURE OF THE ABDUCTORS.

Neil Burdock had his head in the opening that led to the loft, while these events were occurring.

He heard Jack and the others enter the barn, and he withdrew his head and began to tiptoe across the hay toward the rear of the barn, where Sandy was staying with the child, keeping her quiet.

Burdock looked worried. The sweat stood out in great drops on his thick, fleshy neck, and the huge chain stretched across his stomach rose and fell, for his breath came heavily as he made his way across the hay.

"What's up?" said Sandy, for he saw that his chief was almost in a panic.

"Somebody's goin' to git killed in about a minute!"

"Here, you!" he said, speaking roughly to the child. "Look at this!"

He had taken out his handkerchief, and as she turned

toward him he threw it across her mouth, and with a quick motion forced it between her jaws and began to knot it behind her ears, thus making of it a gag.

She tried to scream now, but the gag kept her silent.

Burdock produced a cord and tied her hands behind her back.

"The devil's to pay," he said, speaking quickly to Sandy. "Git yer gun, but don't use it unless you have to. Chalkeye's captured, an' them fellows are in the barn. They'll be up 'ere in a minute. We've got to hide."

He lifted the child and carried her over near the wall, to the lowest point of the pit which Chalkeye had made in the hay for ~~them~~ to occupy.

When he had thrown her down there he covered her over with hay.

Standing still now and listening, while the child squirmed and tried to cry out, both he and Sandy heard the boys moving about in the lower part of the barn.

"Do they know we're here?" asked Sandy.

"Well, they needn't know it, if we can make a good hide of it, unless that fool down there peaches. If he does I'll murder 'im."

He drew out his heavy revolver, and examined the cylinder to make sure it was loaded and in working condition.

Then he went to the spot where the child was kicking and squirming and began to burrow down beside her.

"Here, you!" he said, in a heavy whisper. "If you don't stop yer kickin' I'll choke ye!"

And he meant it.

He was fully resolved that if the searchers came near and it was necessary to choke her to keep her still he would do it.

"Pitch some hay over me, Sandy, and then crawl in yerself!"

Sandy threw some hay over him, and began to burrow downward like a gopher, to secure his own safety.

Down in the lower part of the barn Jack and his friends had begun an investigation, looking everywhere before ascending to the upper part of the barn.

As they were thus engaged a cry came from the men at the door.

Some of the crowd had followed Jack and his friends inside; but others had remained outside, and with these had been Chalkeye.

Chalkeye had made a dash for liberty, and was flying across the field; which was the occasion of the outcry that now drew the attention of the boys. The words of the men at the door told them what had happened.

"A mighty good proof that something's crooked here!" said Jack.

When the lower part of the barn yielded nothing, the daring boys climbed by the ladder up into the big loft.

It was somewhat dark up there, before the eyes became accustomed to the dim light, and at first they could see nothing but the faint outline of the heaped-up hay.

But after a few moments the whole interior of the loft became visible.

"I don't see anything," whispered Phil.

"We'll make a search," said Jack. "Some one had better stay here by the ladder."

Tom volunteered for that place, for it seemed to him an important one.

The boys now scattered out and began to walk slowly over the hay.

Jack was one of the first to reach the pitlike place in which Burdock and his pal had concealed themselves.

He looked at it closely before venturing down into it.

"Not a thing in here!" he heard Wilson Crane say from another part of the loft.

It had begun to seem to some of the boys, and even to Chick Gridley, that they had jumped to hasty and ill-founded conclusions.

That pit in the hay was, however, very suggestive to Jack.

If it had been near the ladder he would have thought little of it, for such a pit might have been made there in an ordinary way by the removal of hay for the cat-

tle. But no one would have walked to that far end of the barn and there taken hay for the cattle before the hay nearer the ladder was used. In addition to this, Jack knew as a matter of fact, if his common sense had not told him, that it is the custom to fill in the further parts of a haymow before filling in close about the entrance. For these reasons that singular-looking hole held for him a suspicious aspect.

With a leap he went down into it, and at the same time heard some one coming across the hay toward the point he had left.

"Anything down there?"

The questioner was Lafe.

"No, I don't think so," was Jack's cautious answer.

He began to walk about, feeling of the hay with his feet.

As he did so, he trod on something hard.

It might have been a stick, he knew; yet in reality it was Sandy's foot.

Jack felt a little quiver of the nerves, but he passed on without showing excitement.

"Nothing in here!" he called to Lafe again.

"I guess we made a mistake."

"It begins to look so."

"What you going to do now?"

"Give it up, I suppose."

All the while Jack was stepping round on the hay, testing it with his feet.

As he did so he saw the hay move just in front of him.

The movement of the hay was caused by the child, who, in spite of the fact that Neil Burdock's heavy fingers were on her throat and he had said he would kill her if she stirred, could not remain still so long. She was almost smothered by the hay piled on her and by that handkerchief gag. Even though in deadly fear of Burdock, she could not keep from making that movement.

Standing still and looking down at the spot, which was quiet now, Jack saw the outline of Burdock's concealed body and observed that the hay had the appearance of being freshly thrown there.

He held up his hand and beckoned to Lafe, who

stood on the edge of the pit looking down; and then with a dive, as if he were leaping from a pier into the water, Jack pitched forward and threw himself on Burdock.

"Help!" he cried; and Lafe came tumbling down to his aid.

Burdock threw back the hay that covered him and thrust up his revolver, revealing himself and the revolver at the same moment; then it roared its contents, for Burdock, knowing that he would have to fight, was like an animal driven into a corner; but Jack's hand turned the weapon aside as it was discharged; and the next moment he had the villain by the throat.

"Help here!" bawled Lafe; and the boys came running from all parts of the barn loft.

Knowing that discovery was now a foregone thing, Sandy sprang from his hiding place, and, knocking down Wilson Crane, who opposed him, he ran for the ladder which Tom Lightfoot was guarding.

He sprang at Tom, as Tom tried to stop him, and the two fell through the opening to the floor below, striking on the hay there.

Up in the pit Jack was having one of the biggest fights of his life. Neil Burdock threw him off once, and got out a knife, which he tried to use.

Jack grasped the knife hand and hung on like a bulldog.

Burdock was a powerful man and was now desperate.

Though Lafe Lampton and Brodie Strawn, and then Phil Kirtland and Jubal, came to Jack's assistance, Burdock rose with them all.

But he could not get away.

They hung to him, Jack clinging to that knife hand; and they threw him down and piled on him.

Other fellows, among them Wilson Crane, came to their aid, and they secured Burdock, finally binding him with a rope which was brought from below.

In the meantime, Tom Lightfoot, assisted by those below, had subdued Sandy.

Burdock was raving and roaring like a caged lion.

Jack had wrenched the knife from him, and he had dropped his revolver in the struggle; and now, with rope on him, he was as helpless as Samson bound.

A continued wriggling in the hay indicated the point where the child was concealed, and she was brought out, frightened and smothered, and was relieved of the choking gag.

* * * * *

Long before the policemen summoned by Nat Kimball arrived, the rescue of little Mamie Powers had been effected and the abductors were in the toils; while a mob of angry men, swarming about them outside of the barn, threatened them with lynching.

"Fellows," said Chick Gridley, proudly, "I think detective work is my line!"

"Well, you had a pretty good nose for the game this time," Jack Lightfoot was pleased to acknowledge.

It was almost enough to restore Ned Skeen to his former strength, when Mamie Powers was brought home to her parents.

Chalkey was caught later in the evening.

The boys from Cranford had suddenly become the heroes of the city.

Mack Remington assumed new importance in the eyes of the conductors of the *Guardian*, for he had been right there when the capture of the abductors took place and knew all about it even to the slightest details, even though the condition of his ankle had kept him from taking an active part in the exciting event.

And the Cranford nine and their friends went back to Cranford feeling that in beating Cardiff, and in rescuing the child and effecting the capture of the villains who had stolen her from her home for a reward, they had done one of the greatest day's work of their lives.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 32, will be "Jack Lightfoot, Archer; or, The Strange Secret an Arrow Revealed." This is a splendid outing story. In olden times battles were fought and won with bows and arrows, and, as is well known, these were the early weapons of the Indians, as well as their weapons of the chase. An Indian bowman has been known to drive an arrow through the body of a buffalo. You will want to hear of the skill of Jack and his friends with the bow and arrow, and, above all things, you will want to know what the strange secret was which the arrow revealed.

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I have just finished reading No. 22, and think that Mr. Stevens is O K. He knows how to write about baseball. I don't think there are any other stories that can beat it. I like to play ball, too, for I think it's good sport. I have read the ALL-SPORTS, from No. 1 up to the present issue, and think that all the boys ought to read it, too. What do you think of my measurements? Age, 16 years; weight, 140 pounds; height, 5 feet 9 inches; chest, 35 inches; waist, 31 inches; hips, 38 inches; thigh, 21 inches; calf, 13½ inches. What do you think of them? Will you please tell me where I am weak, and what is the best work for it? And, hoping to see this in print, I will close, with three cheers for Jack and Mr. Stevens,

G. W. STONE.

Newark, N. J.

Your measurements are all excellent, and much above the average of a boy of sixteen. You have no particular weak points, although your calves should measure fourteen inches, to correspond with your other measurements. To develop your calves, you should walk as much as possible; bicycling is also good. A simple method of developing this muscle is to stand with the feet about six inches apart and lift the toes repeatedly as high as possible from the floor; or, one may walk about the room on his heels until he feels the strain. Reverse this at times, and walk about the room on the toes.

Seeing that the readers of ALL-SPORTS are writing letters and thanking Mr. Stevens, I thought I also ought to write to thank him for writing such a good book for the American youth, and while I am at it, I will tell you what I think of Jack and his friends. Lightfoot is the best all-around athlete of all, and a fine captain for a baseball nine. Reel Snodgrass ought to be run out of Cranford, so he won't make any more trouble for Jack or his friends, either. One thing I am getting tired of is, which girl does Jack like the best, Katie Strawn or Nellie Connor? Phil is all right sometimes, and sometimes he ought to be run out of Cranford. Prof. Sanderson ought to die and get out of the world for good. Tom Lightfoot is all right, only he should not be Jack's rival; he ought to be a high-school boy, like his cousin. Lafe is a good boy and a warm friend of Jack Lightfoot.

I want to thank you once more for publishing such a good and up-to-date book as ALL-SPORTS; every American boy ought to read it, as it teaches you how to live right. ALL-SPORTS is the "king" of all books, for sure. I will close, wishing Mr. Stevens good luck, and with three cheers for Jack Lightfoot and his friends.

OSCAR B. KROLL.

914 View Street, Shreveport, La.

Like all true Southern boys, you are positive in your likes and dislikes. If you like a person you stick to him through thick and thin, but if you dislike him, you cannot help showing it. We believe that Jack is capable of holding his own with Snodgrass, or anyone else: at least, they have not downed him yet.

Which girl does Jack like the best? Well, that's hard to say. Both Katie and Nellie are attractive girls, and probably Jack does not know himself which one he likes best. We appreciate your enthusiastic letter and thank you for your good wishes.

We, the members of the All-Sports Athletic Club, of San Antonio, Tex., have voted to extend to the author and publishers of the ALL-SPORTS WEEKLY our hearty appreciation of their publication. We take all of the current libraries, but all agree that ALL-SPORTS is far ahead of all the rest. We wish long life and prosperity to your publication.

HALSEY SAYLES, President.
ALEX. HOLLAND, Vice President.
BERT HARFOLD, Treasurer.
R. TOOMBS GARRETT, Secretary.
FRANK ELLWOOD,
DAVID G. BARROW,
HARRY E. GARRETT,
JOHN C. HAYNE,
WILL CUYLER,
ARTHUR SAYLES.

We are grateful for the commendation of the All-Sports Athletic Club, of San Antonio. We wish you a prosperous and successful career and a jolly good time in your various sports and pleasures.

I am a reader of your excellent weekly, and would be pleased if you would answer a few questions for me. These are my measurements: Age, 14 years; height, 5 feet 5½ inches; weight, 115 pounds; chest, normal, 31 inches; expanded, 33 inches; waist, 26 inches; biceps, normal, 8½ inches; expanded, 10 inches; calf, 12 inches; thighs, 17½ inches; hips, 30 inches; wrists, 6½ inches; across shoulders, 15 inches; neck, 13 inches. The length of my arm, from the shoulder to the tip of my finger, is 29½ inches. 1. What do you think of my measurements? 2. Do you think I would make a professional ball pitcher? 3. What is good for knock-knees? I hope you will please answer this long letter. Three cheers for Jack and his pards. I remain,

Sonora, Cal.

"DICK MERRIWELL"

1. Your measurements are very good for your age, particularly your height and weight; they are exceptionally good for a fifteen-year-old boy.

2. That will all depend on your ability in that line. By constant practice, you can become a first-class pitcher, and as you could not hope to be accepted as a professional before you are at least twenty years old, you have plenty of time to perfect yourself.

3. You will have to consult a surgeon in this matter, as we cannot advise treatment in a case like the one you mention.

I hope you will excuse my taking the liberty of writing to you, but it seems that I cannot keep from expressing my admiration of your excellent weekly, ALL-SPORTS. It is one of the best libraries I have ever read, and I have read a-plenty. I like its tone and its general get-up, and I must say that it is away ahead of any other five-cent library. I like Jerry Mulligan, and think he is a true-hearted son of the Emerald Isle and a faithful friend of Jack's. Phil Kirtland is a good character, but I think he has too good an opinion of himself and is too jealous. Now, about Jack Lightfoot. Who can help but admire him? He is a true American boy, and one I would just love to meet and have for a friend. I think Mr. Stevens is a wonder, by the way he writes these stories. They are splendid, and I enjoy them more than any other books I have ever read. I have a chum here who used to read another five-cent library, and who thought that it was the best ever published, and said

the ALL-SPORTS couldn't compare with it. I got him to read a couple of the baseball stories, and now he thinks as much of ALL-SPORTS as I do and will read no other. Well, I guess I'll have to close, with best of wishes for the success of the *only* weekly, ALL-SPORTS.
Lafayette, Ind. CHESTER BOWLES.

Your letter is an interesting one, Chester, and if all our readers were as enthusiastic as you are, we'd soon double our circulation. Your chum does not regret that you persuaded him to read ALL-SPORTS, does he? There is no doubt that if ever Jack became your friend he would prove a loyal one and true blue.

Some time ago my cousin in Washington sent me some copies of the ALL-SPORTS WEEKLY, and since that I have obtained every number from the first, and continue getting them as soon as they arrive here. I am living in the Philippines with my father, who is an officer in the army, and as he is at present stationed in Manila, I attend school there. The readers of ALL-SPORTS may think that we in this far-off place do not indulge in any of the games we were accustomed to when we were at home, but such is not the case, as we fellows have a baseball nine, organized from students at the high school here, that is as good as any back in the States. Baseball is becoming popular with the Filipinos, too, and almost any day you can see a scrub nine in many parts of the city playing *our* game. The Filipinos are not very good catchers, but they are corkers in running and stealing bases. I suppose that it comes natural to them to steal anything. Having plenty of time on my hands, I read a great deal, and get almost all the five-cent libraries published; but there is not one of them that can compare to ALL-SPORTS. I thought some of the readers might be glad to hear about life in the Far East, so I will try and describe how we American boys enjoy ourselves in this island possession of Uncle Sam's in the Pacific. Manila is a fine place to live in, particularly if one has lived at some distant army post in the provinces. There is lots of excitement and fun, and now, since they have the electric cars here, it seems just fine. We do not do anything in the middle of the day; from twelve to two-thirty we generally stay indoors and enjoy a *siesta*. About four or five in the afternoon we meet on the ball grounds and athletic field on the Luneta and practice playing. Then, about six in the evening we mount our ponies and ride around the Luneta for an hour, while the band plays, and it seems as if almost every American in Manila is there. Sometimes, after dinner, we take a moonlight swim in the bay, and enjoy it very much. We fellows over here have become such ALL-SPORTS cranks that Mr. La Motte, the bookseller in the Walled City, has to keep increasing his orders for them. We only get them about once a month, however, and they generally come four numbers at a time. I wish we might get them oftener, for we soon read the new ones when they arrive, and have to wait so long for others. Well, I'm afraid that you'll never print this if I don't stop, so I will close, with best of wishes to Mr. Stevens and his hero, dear Jack Lightfoot.
ARTHUR V. GREEN.

Manila, Philippine Islands.

We are, indeed, glad to hear from this enthusiastic admirer of ALL-SPORTS in the far-off Philippines. From your letter we should judge you have a very pleasant time, and we are glad that you can enjoy your favorite game, baseball, even though you are at the other end of the world. We are also glad to hear that among the other benefits the Filipinos have acquired since Uncle Sam has obtained possession of the islands, is a love of our great national game, baseball.

I thought I would express my opinion on the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. I have read all of them myself, and I have not found one bit of trashy literature. I cannot speak too highly of it. Jack Lightfoot is an ideal character, and is a splendid all-around athlete. I am selling five times as many copies of ALL-SPORTS than any other library I sell, and I feel that I could not be successful in the periodical business without the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. I wish Mr. Stevens and Street & Smith success.
Indianapolis, Ind. G. W. HARDY.

We are much gratified at your success in selling ALL-SPORTS, and warmly appreciate your good opinion.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Just at present baseball is the topic in hand, and instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach." No. 28, "How to Umpire." No. 29, "How to Manage Players." No. 30, "Baseball Points."

HOW TO MAKE A CHEAP SKIFF.

No doubt the ingenuity of the American boys has, as usual, put hundreds of home-made boats into our streams and lakes this past summer, but many lads may have been deferred from building by consideration of the cost of material, and the labor and skill which they think necessary to build a serviceable boat. Yet a skiff of the sort commonly used on the Potomac may be built in three or four days by any handy boy of sixteen or eighteen, at an expense for material of four dollars or less.

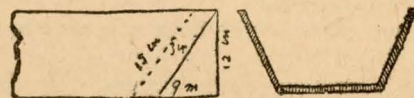
Such a skiff is paddled like a canoe, but is more easily constructed and less liable to damage than a canvas craft. One which will carry two men or three smaller persons with safety is of shallow draught and narrow beam.

The tools necessary to its construction are a hammer, saws, plane, draw-knife, a brace and bit, or gimlet, and a screw-driver. The cost of material will not greatly vary from this list:

5 white pine, planed boards, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch thick, 1 foot wide, 16 feet long.....	\$2.40
3 common siding boards about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, 7 inches wide, 14 feet long....	.36
1 piece planed white pine plank, $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick, 6 inches wide and 8 feet long..	.20
2 pounds eight-penny, steel, cut nails.....	.08
80 $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wood screws.....	.40
1 pound white lead.....	.10
1 pound putty.....	.05
$\frac{1}{2}$ pound oakum.....	.05
1 can ready-mixed paint.....	.35

Total.....\$3.99

The sixteen-foot boards should be free from cracks and large or loose knots, as four of them form the out-

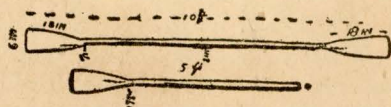


SIDE AND BOTTOM BOARDS.

side of the skiff. If thinner boards be used your skiff will be lighter, but must then be stiffened by more crosspieces and knees.

The first work is to cut from the piece of plank two lengths of eighteen inches each, for the bow and stern posts. Then select two of the sixteen-foot boards for the sides. Cut them square at the ends and of the same

length. Make a mark on the side of one board nine inches from the end, and draw a line from the mark to the corner above. Then saw the board off at this angle.



THE PADDLES.

Draw another line two and three-fourth inches from and parallel to the edge you have cut. Next bring the end of the board to a wedge shape by sawing a bevel from this new line to the edge of the opposite side.

Mark and cut the other ends of the side boards in a similar way, always remembering which side is intended for the inside and which edge for the bottom. The inside face is, of course, the face shortened by the bevel cut at each end, and the bottom is that edge of the plank which is eighteen inches shorter than the other edge or top.

After boring eight holes in the ends of the side planks with a bit or a gimlet the size of your screws, you can easily fasten the bow and stern posts to one side and one end of the other side. Before the oblique cuts on the ends of the boards are screwed to the posts, the cuts should be smeared with white lead and the screws smeared, too. Now cut from the remainder of your plank two strips, two inches wide and thirteen and one-half long; two more sixteen inches long, and a third pair twenty-three inches long.

These strips are to be put across the bottom of the skiff to hold the sides apart and fasten the bottom boards to. To make the strips fit in nicely, the ends should be cut at such an angle that one side will be an inch shorter than the other. The bottom of the crosspiece should also be a trifle shorter than the top.

The sides of the skiff are now standing in V shape, but with the help of another person, or a strong strap and buckle, they can be drawn together at the other end and held until the screws are screwed in. While drawing the ends together, brace the bottom of the sides apart with the short strips of plank placed so as to divide the bottom of the skiff into seven spaces. These strips need not be fastened yet, because the pressure of the sides will probably hold them in place.

Cut the bow and stern posts off close to the lower edges of the side boards, which must be planed perfectly flat in order that the bottom boards may fit closely. After this the crosspieces may be fastened in with two screws at each end, taking care that each piece is perfectly flush with the side boards.

The shortest pair of crosspieces are to be put two feet from the ends, and the others the same distance apart, which should leave the bottom two feet wide in the middle, outside measurement.

If the inner edges of the bottom boards are planed so that when placed together the joint is open like a V, it will hold the calking much tighter. By laying these boards on the bottom and marking around with a pencil, they may be easily cut in the proper shape, allowing half an inch all around to be trimmed off after the bottom has been fastened on.

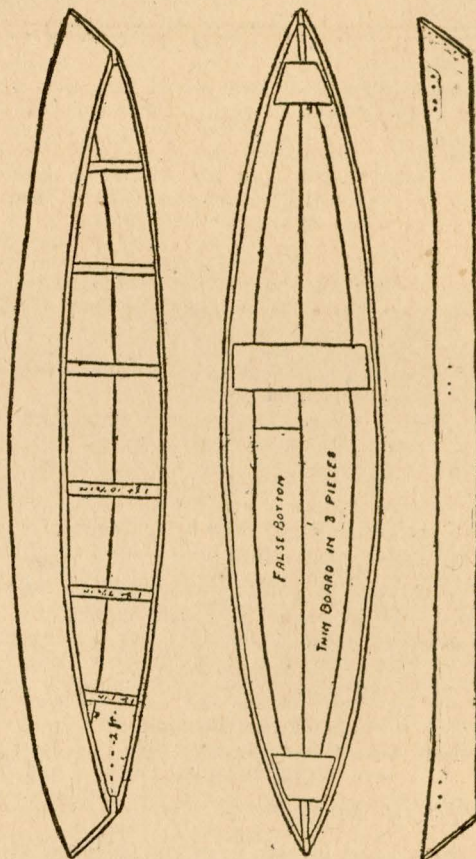
When the lower edges of the sides have been smeared with white lead and a number of screw holes made in each bottom board, these may be fastened on. Each bottom board should be screwed to every crosspiece near

the joint in the middle of the bottom. Distribute the remaining screws around the outer edges of the bottom, and complete the work with nails, so that the bottom shall be fastened to the sides every three inches. The edges of the bottom boards are now readily trimmed down with plane and drawing-knife.

With the pieces of board left from the bottom the seats may be made. A triangular seat is put in each end of the skiff, and one about a foot forward of the middle. The ends of the seats should rest on small cleats, securely nailed three inches below the upper edge of the sides.

The thin boards are for a false bottom, to lie loose on the crosspieces and keep the paddler's feet out of any water which may leak or slop in. This prevents the real bottom from being strained by walking on it. The false bottom is usually made in three pieces.

Out of the remaining pine board the paddles are made.



DIAGRAMS SHOWING METHOD OF BUILDING.

A double paddle is nine and one-half feet long, and a single one, five feet. Both have blades eighteen inches long and six inches wide at the end. The paddle handles may be nicely rounded and the blades made thin and light with the plane and draw-knife.

Now, with an old knife, or chisel, crowd the V-shaped seam in the bottom nearly full of oakum, or cotton waste, and cover it with putty. Cover the nail and screw heads, go over all the seams on the inside and fill any small cracks you may find with the remainder of the putty. Skiff and paddles may now be painted. Two coats should be used on the outside of the skiff.

When used by only one person the paddler generally sits on the middle seat and plies the double paddle.

These skiffs are used on the tidal marshes in rail-shooting, when they are pushed with a long pole forked at the end to prevent its sinking into the mud.

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